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THE APOLOGY
OF
THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

*HISTORICALLY REGARDED WITH
REFERENCE TO SUPERNATURAL REVELATION
AND REDEMPTION.*

BY

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AUTHOR OF HANDBOOKS ON EXODUS AND GALATIANS.

"He sent His word, and healed them."

Ad logicam pergo quae mortis non timet ergo.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

IN the plan of this work there was a First Book of Introduction, giving somewhat elaborate prolegomena with reference to the primitive Apologetic, the modern Apologetic, the relative practice and precepts of Christ, the relative practice and precepts of the apostles, the canon of Scripture, inspiration, and the nature of the internal evidence. That First Book has given place to the present Introductory Survey.

The author never was a professional teacher of Apologetics, nor specially addicted to the study of it. The present work does not aim at an exhaustive systematic exhibition of "evidences." It is essentially what might be described as a layman's book; giving a view of the matter which grew into the author's mind in a life's labour otherwise directed.

The MS. was at the (northern) Antipodes at the time when the author was writing an Introduction to *Exodus*, which to some extent covers a ground that was previously occupied by the present work. There thus may have been in that Introduction an amount and kind of coincidence which would have been censurable if the author had had it in his power to compare it with the MS. He made the Introduction as good as he could, disregarding possibility of coincidence, and relying for condonation, if needed, on the well approved kindness of the editors and publisher of the (*Exodus*) Handbook.

The author is very fortunate in having had such highly qualified and conscientious home editors as the Rev. J. G. Cunningham and the Rev. Alex. Martin; and still more he is

favoured in that earnest personal friendship of theirs, which has borne them through the heavy labour of this editing, amid their own engrossing occupations of ministry and of study. There is a pleasing pain in recording the circumstance, that the late Professor Elmslie intimated readiness to take a part in the home work of this publication, according to request.

In the body of the work there may be some traces of its having passed from the author's hands a considerable number of months ago; but these, if any, cannot be of any significance.

COLUMBA CHURCH, OAMARU, NEW ZEALAND.

ERRATA.

On page 143, *for* Exeoursus 3 *read* Section 2.

On page 176, *for* Section 2 *read* Section 3.

On page 192, *for* Section 3 *read* Section 4.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

| | PAGES |
|--|---------|
| INTRODUCTORY SURVEY, | 1-21 |
| BOOK I. | |
| THE RELIGION AT WORK IN THE SECOND CENTURY, | 25-202 |
| PRELUSION : <i>in that century, it is in effective occupation of the world,</i> | 25-35 |
| CHAP. | |
| OUTWARDLY, IT OVERCOMES THE WORLD, | 36-106 |
| Sec. 1. The general fact, the new unworldly thing in a worldly world, | 36 |
| „ 2. Conflict with worldly <i>magistracy</i> (Trajan) : <i>Bithynian</i> persecution, | 50 |
| „ 3. Conflict with worldly <i>religions</i> (Jewish) : <i>Smyrnan</i> persecution, | 60 |
| „ 4. Conflict with worldly <i>philosophy</i> (M. Aurelius) : <i>Lyonnese</i> persecution, | 78 |
| „ 5. EXCURSION : relative condition of Christian character at that time, | 98 |
| (NOTE : The leading action of the <i>Jews</i> in the religious opposition, pp. 69-77.) | |
| II. INWARDLY, IT EFFECTS A NEW CREATION OF MANKIND, | 107-202 |
| Sec. 1. The Work of Faith : not miracle, but Christ, | 107 |
| EXCURSION 1. <i>Ecclesiastical miracles</i> (relatively to this century), | 118 |
| „ 2. The positive import of the Christian “faith,” | 135 |
| „ 2. The Labour of Love : the Christian morality, in effect a new creation, | 143 |
| Peter's <i>Christian Directory</i> : all about <i>common duties</i> of man, | 148 |
| Includes <i>all the relations</i> of man's life :—subject, servant, wife, | 159 |
| Further note on <i>Paul's Directory</i> , | 172 |
| „ 3. The Patience of Hope : resurrection and the life everlasting, | 176 |
| The hope of immortality had practically died in man's heart, | 180 |
| Extreme view of <i>Tertullian</i> : disputed view of <i>Justin Martyr</i> , | 188 |
| „ 4. The threefold Apostolic cord, Peter, Paul, John : Apologetic importance of the distinct historical appearance of “the apostles.” Special importance of “the first three,” | 192 |

BOOK II.

| | PAGES |
|---|------------|
| THE EXTERNAL EVIDENCES OF THE RELIGION, | 205-544 |
| PRELUSION : the condition of mind for judging, | 205 |
| CHAP. I. THE CHIEF CORNER-STONE : Christ in the Gospel History. | 217-314 |
| Sec. 1. Introductory : <i>Incarnation</i> : "The desire of all nations," | 217 |
| „ 2. The man : <i>Sinlessness of Jesus</i> : "miracle of manhood," | 227 |
| „ 3. His words : including His <i>prophecy of His resurrection</i> , NOTE : <i>Nature of the apologetic argument from prophecy</i> , | 242 255 |
| „ 4. His works : <i>Evidence of miracle</i> : His miracles, | 270 |
| 1. On the ground of Gospel History, | 271 |
| 2. The miracle is a proof that Jesus is the Christ of God, | 276 |
| 3. Miracle is in its essential nature "extraordinary," supernatural, | 282 |
| 4. The miracle is shown to be true by the test of the kingdoms of Satan and of God, | 297 |
| 5. The idea of God as the Holy One is completely wanting in the thaumaturgy of the heathen world, | 307 |
| II. THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES (Resurrection), | 315-410 |
| Sec. 1. The Christian <i>belief</i> in the Resurrection of Christ, | 318 |
| „ 2. <i>Monumental</i> evidence : Christendom : Lord's Day, | 326 |
| „ 3. The <i>throned</i> witnesses, especially <i>Paul</i> , | 348 |
| „ 4. The <i>Primary Testimonies</i> (Gospel History of Resurrection), | 382 |
| III. THE FOUNDATION OF THE PROPHETS, | 411-544 |
| Sec. 1. As to our being on that foundation, | 411 |
| „ 2. Mosaism : trial of the mythic "theory," | 419 |
| 1. The monumental nation, | 433 |
| 2. The Tabernacle, | 434 |
| 3. The Passover, | 440 |
| 4. The call and sending of Moses, | 447 |
| „ 3. CONTINUATION : the Mosaic <i>Origines</i> , | 458 |
| 1. Creation, | 464 |
| 2. Fall, | 470 |
| 3. Unity of mankind, | 472 |
| 4. Noachian deluge, | 473 |
| 5. Distribution of nations, | 476 |
| 6. Confusion of tongues, | 477 |
| 7. Egypt and Sinai, | 487 |
| „ 4. Prophetism : wonder of wisdom : <i>real view of the world</i> : prediction of the incalculable, | 492 |
| 1. The question of apologetics here, | 495 |
| 2. As to the world in general, | 508 |
| 3. <i>The Church</i> in especial, | 521 |
| 4. And above all, <i>Christ in the New Dispensation</i> , | 528 |
| APPENDIX.—NOTE : on unfulfilled prophecy, and the prophetic use of numbers, | 542 |

INTRODUCTORY SURVEY.



WHEN the taciturn Caliph Omar was entering Jerusalem now taken, he was pertinaciously assailed by an aged Christian priest with refutation of Mohammedanism and proof of Christianity. "Cut me off," said the Saracen commander, "that old man's head, unless he be silent." That old man, with no shield but faith, no sword but the word, setting himself alone to stem the then raging lava torrent of fanaticism, with its brutish alternative of the Koran or death, is typical of the fact, that Christianity is an *apologetic* religion. Not only now, in the second period of the Reformation epoch, from the close of the seventeenth century to this day, apology has been, by force of circumstances, a prominent action of the religion toward the world. In the primitive Church history, too, there was a "period of apologetics," which in other respects was the most glorious period in all that history, the first heroic age of confession and of martyrdom for truth. And this, occasioned by outward conditions of the time, was in accordance with the distinctive genius of the system, as appearing in scriptural precedent and rule.

Christianity is *the* apologetic religion. No other religion has ever seriously set itself to the endeavour to subdue a hostile world by apology (from *logos*, "reason," or "reason," *ratio* vel *oratio*, 1 Pet. iii. 15), to *reason* the sinful world out of worldliness into godliness. The aspect of the new religion thus appearing toward the freedom of the human soul, in addressing itself to the reason in order to reach the man in his conscience and his heart, struck intelligent heathens as a presumptive evidence of truth and divinity, since reason is "the door" (John x. 1, etc.)—the *lawful* way—of seeking to win and to control the manhood. And that aspect was given to

the religion from the beginning by the author of it. Apology, prescribed by Peter (1 Pet. iii. 15), himself (Acts ii., x.) the protapologist both to Gentiles and to Jews, was copiously illustrated throughout the great career of Paul, who (Acts ix. 15; Eph. iii. 8) in especial had the mission of battling for the world's new life by laying the claims of Christianity before the peoples. Christ Himself not only (Luke xii. 5-12, xxi. 12-15) prescribed apology in the same connection with confession and with martyrdom; He is personally "the faithful martyr" (Gr. for "witness" in Rev. i. 5). Before Pontius Pilate He witnessed a good confession, which by Paul (1 Tim. vi. 13) is placed, in respect of inviolable sacredness, on a level with the being of the living God. And His whole career, especially of miraculous working crowned by His resurrection, was apologetic in the sense of constituting a proof, producible in open court of the world's judgment, in attestation of His claim to be from God. So, too, of that inaugural career, of Moses and the prophets, through which the religion first unfolded its nature in the view of mankind: it not only had a doctrine, of grace and of law, but also a proof of the doctrine, in miracle and prophecy.

There is an *internal evidence*, most profoundly reasonable, constituted by the spiritual character of the religion, apprehended by the truly "higher" criticism of those who have a truly spiritual mind (1 Cor. ii. 8-15, where *N.B.* that in ver. 15 the Gr. for "judge" is *criticise*). In the present work that internal evidence will be left out of view, as not being *producible*, in the open court of the world's judgment, for subjection to its reasonable tests; and consequently as not belonging to apology proper. The *indirect external evidence* (which is an "experimental" evidence) of the sensible effect of the religion on the character and lives of those receiving it, is that which has proved most peculiarly efficacious in the spread of Christianity as a leaven that leaveneth the lump. It is most powerfully exemplified in that "period of apologetics" in which Christianity first appeared, as a new creation, on the open theatre of the world, after long preparation in the cloistral seclusion of Israel in Canaan. And the evidence of this kind will come before us, in the first Book of

the present work, in our study of Christianity "at work in the second century." But on our part that study will be only a preparation for the study of the religion in its origin in the first century: that is, what we shall call the *primæval* Christianity, employing the more general description *primitive* Christianity with reference to the period subsequent to the Apostolic age. And when we reach that *primæval* Christianity, then, in the second Book of this work, we shall concentrate our attention on the *direct external* evidence: that is to say, the evidence, in open court of the world, that is producible, with reference to the claims of the religion, in proof of the statement, that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor. v. 19).

The subject of the New Testament Scriptures we will dwell upon for a little at the present stage, as illustrating the historical method of ascertainment, and as calling for some notice in relation to the inquiry which is the proper purpose of the present work as a whole. A distinguishing feature of the learned unbelief of our most recent time has been a great protracted effort, with a large amount of confident and even jubilant enthusiasm, to destroy or undermine the received opinion as to the authorship of those Scriptures, that they are the genuine work of apostles and their authorised associates, so as to be material of authentic history of the *primæval* Christianity, constituting a trustworthy source of information about the matters of fact they speak of. As against that opinion it has been contended since the beginning of this century, conspicuously by the Tübingen schools under the grand-mastership of Baur, that the New Testament Scriptures are mainly forgeries perpetrated in the second century, *e.g.* for the purpose of putting a false face on the *primæval* history, so as to conceal the fact of a fundamental and essential difference of the second-century Christianity from that of Christ and the original apostles. That which is thus denied, the authenticity as well as the genuineness of those Scriptures, does not need to be presupposed by an inquirer in order to his attaining to a rational assurance of the truth of this religion, as our knowledge of the substantive facts of the Reformation movement is not dependent upon the writings of

the first Reformers and their associates or immediate successors, but could be derived and verified from trustworthy sources, though those writings had not existed, or were shown to be forgeries. But, on the other hand, the supposed fact that those Scriptures are either authentic or genuine, so as to bring us face to face with apostles and their associates, would carry us far toward the conclusion that the wonderful things they speak of are historical realities, so that the religion they represent must needs be true and divine. For a doubt of the veracity of men like Paul and Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John would only show an absence of moral sanity, to be disregarded in serious reasoning on the ground of history. Now the grand assault has been completely defeated, the theorising which was the life of it has been utterly destroyed (see Dan. ii. 35), although it continues to be echoed by some teachers who imagine they are leaders in the van of "progress." The previously received opinion as to those Scriptures, that they are the genuine work of apostles and their authorised associates, has been definitely established on the old foundations in a clearer light. And that result has been reached substantially by the historical process, of scholarly ascertainment and solidly rational judgment, on the ground of fact as to the second-century Christianity. The history of the new attainment is somewhat as follows:—

Strauss, to his own satisfaction, tore the Gospel History of wonders in shreds and tatters of incoherent, exaggerating, and distorting and discolouring gossip about things in ordinary course of nature and in common experience of human life. But Baur, his master, was not satisfied. He felt that the work of destructive criticism was not really done, nor even properly begun; that there could be no true beginning made, nor rational foundation laid, unless there were a satisfactory answer to the question,—how, if the primæval history be thus a fable, are we to account for *the Scriptures*, of which that history is the foundation, heart, and soul? The answer which he found—as here too, "to him that hath shall be given"—was, his famous "forgery" theory of the origination of those Scriptures. And that theory is utterly demolished, as the little stone out of the mountain destroyed Nebuchadnezzar's great image of a lie, by the fact of Christianity in

the second century as history shows it. Here the process of reaching a conclusion regarding the first century upon the ground of the second is one of simply scholarly ascertainment and sound historical judgment, making no demand upon that "higher" criticism which is competent only for the spiritual mind. The historical fact as to the second century, incontrovertibly established, shows that the Scriptures in question cannot have been the work of forgery within it, but must have come down to it from honest apostles and evangelists in the first: inasmuch as the second-century Christianity really presupposes the existence of those Scriptures before it began, and gives positive proof of their pre-existence, and is of such a character as to preclude the possibility of either the reception or the execution of such a forgery as the theorising assumes.

It will serve the purpose of the present initial survey to go back a little in that history, to the contemplation of a sample of the value of the historical method which is to be found in the present connection within the first century itself: as if a detachment of an invading army had reached and taken possession of the citadel of the land invaded by some such means as conveyance by balloon. Baur, and all other scholars who have studied the subject, and whose judgment is worth anything, own as unquestionable the genuine Pauline authorship of the four great theological Epistles, *Romans*, *1st* and *2nd Corinthians*, and *Galatians*. Further, Baur, to his dying day (e.g. in his *Vorlesungen*—Lectures—published posthumously, A.D. 1866), with reference to *the resurrection of Christ*, not only admitted, but strongly asserted, as things that have to be believed if history be worth anything—1. That the resurrection was, from the great Pentecost onward, believed in by all Christians as a vitally fundamental fact in the heart of their religion; and 2. That Paul, throughout his apostolic career, was fully persuaded of the historical reality of a glorious appearance of the risen Christ to him personally on his persecuting way to Damascus. Now, let us consider how these things bear upon the position of Strauss and Baur in relation to the general subject of the primæval Christianity and its literature.

Strauss's fundamental objection to the Gospels was, that

miracle is impossible; and the so-called "historical criticism" of Baur, his master, was really under confessed domination of the metaphysical principle of Hegelian pantheism, that in history there has to be absolute continuity, with no such "gap" or "break" as would be constituted by a real beginning, which miracle involves. On the ground of that objection, Strauss made a Tübingen contribution to "historical criticism," by reasoning for a date of origin of the Gospels long after the received date, *on the ground* that at a time so early as the received date, the Christians could not be prepared to accept a story of such wonders as these existing Gospels have; inasmuch as at that date there had not been time enough for the *mythus* evolution in its twofold process of—1. The Christians day-dreaming themselves into imagination of wonders; and 2. Settling into belief of those dream-wonders as historical realities. But all that is destroyed by what is admitted by those two masters. Suppose, for instance, that, as was strongly maintained by Baur, both Paul from the date of his conversion, and the whole community of Christians down from the great Pentecost, believed in the historical reality of Christ's resurrection. Then how could they, believing in that stupendous miracle, the sunrise which (cp. Eph. iv. 10) fills with its light the whole apostolic age, have any difficulty in believing in the other miracles of our existing Gospels, which, as compared with that resurrection miracle, are only so many radiant specks of dust in the sunlight? And passing from that, we mark further and distinctly what is folded in the confessedly Pauline authorship of those four great theological Epistles.

That is, with reference to the question, *Were* the Christians of course unprepared to believe in miracles of Christ, so that they could not have accepted our existing Gospels, until far past the middle of the apostolic age? These four Epistles all belong to (say, A.D. 57—A.D. 60) an early part of that middle age. They contain a greater number of references (namely, four) to miracle than are contained (namely, three) in all the other Epistles. And in combination they demonstrate, as clearly as daylight, the historical fact, that so early the Christians universally believed in miracles as worked in their own time by apostles, and by some who were not apostles,

and by some who apparently were not even evangelists nor church-officers of any sort.

NOTE of the details.—1. To the Romans (Rom. xv. 19, 20), Paul speaks, incidentally, *about himself personally*, as having, in his founding of Churches, been in the way of working miracles, all the time from the beginning of his career at Jerusalem down almost to the day of this writing: a statement which, with so many men continually visiting their great city from all quarters, the Roman Christians could easily test, as if they had been watching that whole career through a telescope. 2. To the Corinthians (2 Cor. xii. 12, 13), while referring to the fact of his having—say, six years ago—personally toiled as through a campaign of miracle-working (the word for “patience” there, as in Heb. xii. 2, means *endurance*, as of toil in battle or campaign), he speaks of miracle-working as *an Apostolic badge of office*: so that the Apostolic profession of working miracles for credential attestation of that office, must have been familiar to the mind of all Christians in the world. 3. To the Galatians (Gal. iii. 5), long after the foundation-time in their case is past, he speaks about miracle-working, in attestation of doctrine, as going on among them at this time of his writing; and that all but certainly not by any apostle, but (cp. Acts viii. 5–8) perhaps by some evangelist. 4. To the Corinthians, in his First Epistle, he (1 Cor. xi.–xiv.) spoke at length of supernatural operations that were going on among them at the time of his writing, of such a kind and amount that they must have been known about by Christians all the world over. They were of such a nature as to be fitted for producing a powerful impression of wondering awe on casual heathen visitors, looking in upon this new movement, from the great stream of population that was continually passing across that isthmus between the Eastern and the Western worlds. The amount of the operations was so copious, in the hands of a somewhat unruly Church, as to involve a peril to decency and order. Presumably those hands, in this relation, were not evangelists nor office-bearers, but the commonalty of Christians there.

The Christians who thus universally believed in miracles as in their own day performed by all apostles, probably also by some evangelists, and even by ordinary believers at this or that important strategic point in the great campaign,—why should they be unable to believe in miracles as performed by the Lord? Would they not rather have been unable to

believe in the truthfulness of a gospel that should *not* ascribe to the Great Master such works as were done by the servants who went forth in His name?

This reasoning illustrates the nature of the historical process of our proposed method in this work. It results in an argument on the ground of a fact—of the genuineness of those four Epistles—which is definitively established as matter of scholarly ascertainment and historical judgment; so that now any doubt of its reality falls to be regarded as only a proof of ignorance of the subject, or of some incapacity of judging in the case. Now such facts there are in the ascertainable Christian condition of the second century, from which it is possible to judge as to what must have existed in the first. For instance, relatively to the collection of New Testament Scriptures, it is a fact of great importance, established beyond all possibility of doubt except through incapacity or ignorance, that *at the close of the second century the Scriptures of our existing Canon, and only they, were held in the bosom of the Church with a religious reverence that was given to no other books but those of the Old Testament, upon the view that, as Apostolic in their authorship, they were a divinely-inspired rule.*

Irrespective of detailed proofs, *the opinion* of the Christian community, at a time as near the apostolic age as we are to the first French Revolution, is itself an evidence of greatest weight. The question is not one of recondite theological doctrine as to the meaning of the books, but one of plain historical facts as to the authorship. And authorship is, by the common consent of literary judges, held as conclusively established by reception of a book, as the work of this or that man, on the part of the community among whom it has appeared and to whom it pertains. But those Christians were not merely as the French people of this day are in relation to important documents of the period of 1789. They *lived upon* the Scriptures, in a manner and measure unparalleled in human history. The Scriptures now in question were held by them as part of that heritage from heaven, their only true possession upon earth, to be sacredly transmitted for God's honour and man's life in His love to the generations following. Further, outcast from mankind, they were all the

more closely bound together among themselves, by strong and tender sympathy, in a union as wide as the world which was coming into occupation by the gospel: thus (A.D. 177), Irenæus of Smyrna is a minister in Gaul, and the Celtic Churches of Lyons and Vienne send a letter about the persecution they hence suffered to sister Churches in far Asia Minor. At a much earlier period Clement of Rome (A.D. 96?) writes to the Corinthians, Polycarp of Smyrna (*circa* A.D. 108) to the Philippians, and Ignatius (A.D. 107), on his way to martyrdom, to various Churches and individuals: so as to suggest the thought of a community, world-wide in extent, as being of *literally* one mind: as the body is all-pervasively one whole network of organic sensibility. And as of extension, so of duration. That one mind of Christendom was not isolated in the closing of the second century. It was alive, with one whole organic sensibility of life, up through the century to the first, as a river is all in one movement from the fountains to the sea. Irenæus, who lived into the third century (*ob.* A.D. 203), had been a pupil of Polycarp, who (martyred, A.D. 155) had been a personal disciple, and for thirty years a contemporary of the Apostle John. The one mind of the second century was thus in a *vital continuity* of relation to the first, resembling the personal consciousness of an individual, in his remembrance of a great thing in his own past experience, which has determined thereafter the whole course of his career. The *primæval* Christianity was thus ever—witness the Lord's day and the sacraments—before the mind of the primitive Church: as no part of Palestine is out of sight of "holy Lebanon." And the network of that one Christian mind, coextensive with all Christendom in space and time, was from the first founding of Christianity directed and wielded in every locality by a Church organisation, under deacons, elders, bishops, expressly for such purposes as that of keeping and guarding sacred books.

It is impossible to see why such mean villainy as forgery should, at the risk of death eternal, throw itself into the fabrication of sacred books of a religion, the very profession of which exposed a man to peril of death temporal. The Church of that heroic age, of confession and of martyrdom

for Christ and His gospel, was not in a moral condition for production of forgers, nor for the reception of books of lies about the gospel and its history. And, while a veritable forgery of one of the holy simple beautiful Books of the New Testament might overtask the creative original genius of a thousand Shakespeares, it happens that creative originality is precisely the one gift which, in the second century, was wanting to the Christian mind as shown in literary production, more markedly than it has been wanting at any other noteworthy period in all the Christian centuries.

The reasoning on this general ground is greatly strengthened by connection with particulars of detailed evidence, such as the following:—

Even where there is no occasion for mention of the new Scriptures, there are visible traces of their influence upon the Christian mind all through the century. Thus in the few short and simple extant writings of Apostolic Fathers—who have been contemporary with Apostles:—*e.g.* Roman Clement, writing to the Corinthians, refers to Paul's having written to them; and his having written to the Philippians, who may remember Clement (Phil. iv. 3), is referred to by Polycarp in his letter to them; which letter also shows, without his knowing or intending it, that he has 1st Peter not only by heart, but in the very structure of his Christian mind. Papias (*circa* A.D. 125?), said to have, like Polycarp, been a disciple of John the Apostle, in a fragment that has reached us, tells what he has learned about the original composition of Mark's and Matthew's Gospels from a contemporary of the original Apostles (unless, indeed, "the elder" he there speaks of be John himself); and in another fragment of his we incidentally come to see how a settled Christian minister of that day, in course of "expositions" of writings concerning the Lord, could with reference to details consult the memory of men who had been "followers" of those apostles. Justin Martyr, in "apologising" about the middle of the century, has occasion to refer to apostolic *memoirs* of the Great Ministry, which unquestionably are Gospels; and somewhat later (say, A.D. 180) Irenæus, foolishly reasoning about *the purposes* of the number four, without intending it, makes perfectly clear *the fact*, that four was universally recognised as the number of those Gospels as far back as was known then, *i.e.* from the Apostolic age: a demonstration corroborated by the title, *Diatessaron* ("all through four"), of a work of Tatian his contemporary;—a sort of "harmony" of the Gospels, long

supposed to have been lost, but recovered not many months ago. But now we come into full light on the completed collection. The last quarter of the century opens for us with a catalogue of the apostolic Scriptures, that will be recovered after drifting down through sixteen centuries in a barbarous Latin translation (*Muratorî* fragment). In the century there have appeared at least two versions of the new Scriptures (Syriac and old Latin): one of which (the Syriac) may have been begun piecemeal before the beginning of the century, while the other was becoming antiquated in Tertullian's time at the close of it. This Father, in guarding the treasures against heresy, now risen, shows a powerfully trenchant vigilance relatively to the Canon and the text of the new Scriptures as having place in the Western or Latin Church; while in the Eastern or Greek Church, what now is known as Biblical criticism of those Scriptures is fairly begun at learned Alexandria by Pantænus and Clement, at the head of a Christian school—where they will be succeeded by Origen, the most celebrated scholar of his age.

Not to delay further on this, be it observed, *with reference to the positive contents* of the Christianity that is defended,—the primitive Apologetic was confronted with antagonism of what has now come to be the real antagonist confronting the modern Apologetic:—that is, *anti-supernaturalism* or *atheistic naturalism*. This is what the apology really had to contend against at the two salient points, of bodily resurrection and of divine government of the world.

The same thing is what appears in professed dealings with the Christian religion on the part, *e.g.*, of Renan, proceeding on the presupposition that “there is no supernatural;” and of the far abler Strauss, putting everything to the test of an assumed impossibility of miracles; and of his grand master Baur, in a so-called “historical criticism,” avowedly under all-pervasive domination of the pantheistic Hegelian principle of absolute continuity. While on the surface there is cavilling or debating about particulars of the Bible religion and its documents, the question really is of supernaturalism in general, and the real opponent is atheistic naturalism,—a quintessential worldliness of metaphysic, perhaps in gown and bands, masquerading under forms of historical induction and literary judgment.

Let it, then, be understood, as presupposed in all the following exercitation, that the religion in question on our part is one of all-pervasive thorough-going supernaturalism, which may be represented by such utterance as follows :—

The Church is a new kingdom of God among men, wherein He dwells in a supernatural Presence that is realised through ordinances. “God is light;” and there is a coming righteous judgment of all men according to their works. In eternity, “the door is shut:” but now, repentance and forgiveness of sins are to be preached to all nations in the name of Christ; with certification, that there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we may be saved. The Bible is an oracular Book, of which the primary author is the Holy Ghost who moved the holy men of God that wrote it: so that the Scripture cannot be broken, because what “is written” is God’s word. Christ is God incarnate. He was conceived in a virgin’s womb, and is risen from the dead. Atonement in Him is God’s provision of reconciliation on a righteous way of peace with guilty sinners, namely, the way of expiatory sacrifice, provided by the sovereign redeeming love of God, to satisfy His justice offended by their sin. Regeneration is new creation, by sovereignly efficacious grace of the Divine Spirit. Justification is free pardon and acceptance, received by faith as a pure and simple gift of God’s mercy, and bestowed by Him on the ground of His own righteousness in Christ. Sin is sinful. It is not natural evil merely, but distinctively moral evil. It brings guilt on the sinner, placing him under condemnation; and constitutes in him a spiritual condition of impotency in pollution. God hates it in His holiness, and in His rectoral justice punishes it with death. The race of man is fallen into an inheritance of corruption and of guilt; so that all men are by nature children of wrath, born slaves of sin. Deliverance is possible only through sovereignty of divine redeeming mercy. In order to man’s redemption, incarnation is assumption of complete manhood by a person who is truly God. In the unity of Godhead there be three Persons. The Holy Ghost is a distinct person; who, proceeding from the Father and the Son, works in men graciously, quickening and sanctifying the redeemed of Christ, the elect of God. Creation is the origination, mediately or immediately, of all things in the universe by free action of God’s will. Providence is His ruling all their action and sustaining them all in being. Special providence is His directing the course of events in the world to accomplish—

ment of His purposes toward and in connection with the Church. Miracle is extraordinary providence, exhibiting "the finger of God." Prophecy is supernatural communication of His mind. In prediction of the incalculable, it is a miracle of wisdom; so as to be, like miracle of power, an evidential wonder or attesting "seal." Prayer is "asking" from "Our Father who is in heaven."

BOOK I.

CHRISTIANITY AT WORK IN THE SECOND
CENTURY.

PRELUSION:

AS TO THE SECOND CENTURY.

CHRISTIANITY IN EFFECTIVE OCCUPATION OF THE WORLD.

OF the indirect external evidence of the truth of Christianity, a very important part is to be found in the historical effect of its coming into the world; and that effect is seen most clearly in the history of the initial movement of this religion, beyond the period of its infancy during the earthly ministry of Christ, and of its childhood under tutelage of the apostles. In that initial movement it becomes disclosed to view as a new thing, a great original force of light and life, which while in the world is not of the world, but is opposed by the world with all its powers and from its whole heart, and yet overcomes the world simply by the "name" of Christ, or the "word" of faith. To realise, to see and feel as in historical fact, that "open sesame," of the rock-mountain of the world's heart receiving what it hates, and what proves to be in effect a new spiritual life of mankind, is to have an important qualification for proceeding to a definitive judgment as to the question, Was God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself? And it is to be furnished with what unquestionably is very important presumptive evidence in the case.

*appt to the world
yet overcome*

We will concentrate our attention on the second century. In later centuries, the religion has come to have the world ostensibly favouring it as a visible Christendom, outwardly a domain of Christ. And when thus at ease in the world, it may come to be worldly in its ease, really under influence of worldly principles, even in the discharge of its distinctively spiritual offices. In concentrating our attention on the second century, we have the great advantage of seeing Christianity as a stream that has newly issued from the fountain; so that

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its original character is comparatively clear and distinct as a new thing in the world, while yet its progress has gone so far as to evince its conquering power; in that, notwithstanding all that the world's powers can do for the repression or extirpation of it, this new thing is in effective occupation of the world, established there inexpugnably, as "a kingdom that cannot be moved."

In the fifth century, Augustine wrote a great apologetic work on *The City of God*. Making due allowance for fallacy of general descriptions, we may venture to represent the world of Roman empire (Luke ii. 1) as, generally, being in a real sense a city of God even in the second century. This it is through possession of the world by the gospel as a power of light. To one gifted with Asmodean vision, the then state of the world might well appear as if a city had been far toward completeness of general illumination. The public buildings and main thoroughfares are lighted up. Lights are appearing in the side streets and lanes all through the city, and out far beyond the remotest of the suburbs. Often it cannot be known where they come from that kindle these lamps, or whence the lamps themselves. Some say that the oil is from heaven, and that the light is inextinguishable. If a lamp be broken, another appears in the place of it. If a Christian be slain, twelve new living witnesses come forward: it is a proverb among them, that blood of martyrs is a seed of Christians. The world's "powers" of magistracy, priesthood, learning have done their utmost to stamp out the light, but they only spread it, as "an hearth of fire among the wood."

Not long after the close of this period, there was executed a *graphite*, or caricature, which has been disinterred in our own time, in excavation below the surface of modern Rome, upon what is supposed to have been on the level of the streets of ancient Rome, a side wall of the palace of Severus. It represented a Greek slave in an attitude of reverence, near to a cross, on which hangs a man with the head of an ass; while at the foot, in explanation, the artist has written, in a sprawling Greek hand, "Alexamenos worships his god." The artist himself was long before pictured by Paul to the life, in saying as to men's views of Christ crucified, that He is "to the Greeks foolishness." But the artist, without

intending it, illustrated primitive Christianity, not only thus in his own person, but also by his work which we have looked at. He, we may suppose, was a Greek slave of the palace, a heathen, intending to vex Alexamenos, his fellow-servant in the household. And the mocking Greek slave, the shallow blasphemer, the self-sufficient scorner, showed by his works *that Christianity was by this time known about*, even among loose outsiders in the world's population, and known to have in the heart of it a crucified man, whom the Christians worshipped as God.

The same thing was shown, so early as the middle of the second century, by the philosopher Lucian (see below, p. 94, etc.), in his strange story of the madcap philosopher Peregrinus, who, in emulation of the Christians' dying for the gospel, burned himself to death out of vanity. It is not certain that Lucian meant his Peregrinus for a caricature picture of the Christians, who otherwise appear in the story as quite respectable in a simple, honest liberality of zeal. But he has a side allusion to the Grand Master of their religion, in which can be perceived the very spirit of the self-sufficient scorner, the shallow blasphemer, the mocking Greek slave, that sought to vex Alexamenos fifty years after. The philosopher, too, a really gifted literary wit, without principle or self-respect,—a sort of clever scamp,—was, in respect of religion, only a loose outsider. Of the real inward character of Christianity he is not likely to have known anything beyond what was in the air, within the knowledge of every one. He, too, without intending it, showed *that this new religion was known about in the world* of mankind around him, in respect both of the character of Christians and of the centre of their religion in Christ. These two, separated widely in station, and standing respectively at the close and at the middle of the second century, show that within that period there was among even loose outsiders an acquaintance with Christianity, perhaps as full and clear as the acquaintance with it which might be found in the mind of such loose outsiders—of the servile and literary classes—in London at this day. The suggestion thus arising is, that *the Roman empire of the second half of the second century had already come to be a sort of Christian country*, in this

correctly stated

The first man, taking
him, the same thing.

respect, that there was all over and through it a "light of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord."

And that knowledge was not merely a surface thing, on the minds of scoffers. The scoffer would have been nothing without the believer, to whom Christ crucified is "the power of God, and the wisdom of God." The light had come into the souls of men, renewing their lives, as the spring sunlight is a new life to the physical world. Tertullian's career as an apologist is marked exactly by the year A.D. 200 as that in which it culminated. The war-worn veteran, on occasion of whose martyrdom he wrote the tract on *the Soldier's Crown*, was only one of many who, at the time of the Emperor Severus, were found ready to die for the name of Christ, and to show that they loved the light of His gospel more than their lives. And as to the extent to which this vital Christianity had spread in the world, Tertullian, an educated Roman lawyer, addressing the then world of Roman empire, and knowing that there were many who would be eager to find him out in a misstatement if he made one, bore witness as follows:—

In his work, *Against the Jews* (7), he states,—That Christ is now believed on in the world, not only by the varied peoples (which he names) spoken of in Acts ii. 9, 10, but also by *African* Gaetulians and Moors, through all the bounds of *Spain*, among the varied tribes of *Gaul*, and in parts of *Britain* which the Romans have not reached; besides *Sarmatians*, *Dacians*, *Germans*, *Seythians*, and remote, unknown populations of isolated localities, which he is unable to enumerate, and whose names would not be recognised by his readers if he mentioned them.

What he thus represents as effectively occupied by Christianity is, *the whole world as it then was to the view of a well-informed Roman citizen*, settled in African Carthage. The description which he gives is clear and distinct when he speaks of what lies within the limits of the empire, and thus brings into view North-Western Europe, as well as North Africa along with the East. It is vague, as his knowledge must have been, with reference to the populations beyond the Rhine and the Danube, and the African peoples outside of the Roman border. And now, our knowledge of

Christianity in that first age beyond the Roman Empire—*e.g.* in India—is vague and uncertain, coming to us only through a dim, broken tradition. But, in substance, what he describes as well known is, *a whole world occupied by the gospel*. And the *completeness* of that occupation, in those localities which it has reached, is illustrated by the well-known passage in his *Apologeticus* (37), which runs:—

For if we chose to go to war against you,—not to speak of secret revenges,—would we not have numbers and force enough for the purpose? Are the Moors and the Marcommanni (with whom the empire has had troubles on its border), forsooth, and the Parthians themselves, and their like,—who, no matter how great they are, are only of one place here or there,—are they more in number than those (namely, the Christians) who are of the whole world? We are of yesterday (his famous *Hesterni sumus*), and we have filled all your places,—cities, islands, castles, townships, municipalities (Roman City), tribes, wards, palace, senate, forum.

A fervid orator may exaggerate, but an able, honest lawyer like Tertullian, speaking to the world as it then was, could not have so spoken as he here speaks on behalf of Christianity if his very striking representation of completeness in that occupation by the gospel had not been substantially and notoriously correct. And his testimony is corroborated by that of other witnesses, who speak of earlier periods of the century.

Irenæus, an old pupil of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the Apostle John, is supposed to have been the writer of that letter to the Christians of Asia and Phrygia in which has come down to us the contemporary account of the great persecution of Lyons and Vienne (A.D. 177). That district of Gaul was frequented by Greeks for commercial purposes. The Roman domination, no doubt, contributed a considerable element of Latin race to the population. But the basis was native Celtic; so that Irenæus, in the preface to his great work *On Heresies*, apologises for the rustiness of his Greek, on the ground of his having, in his ministerial work, fallen out of use of his Greek mother-tongue, using the language of the Celts. Paul's Galatians may have contributed toward forming a close connection, which appears to have existed, between

the primitive Greek Oriental Christianity and the evangelisation of the Celts of North-Western Europe. In any case, Irenæus, apparently the most learned Christian of his period, was very well placed for knowing the state of Christianity in his day.

He (*On Heresies*, ii. 10) speaks of "the Church" as scattered abroad all over the habitable earth (where in his *καθ' ὅλης* we see coming in the idea of *Catholic* Christianity, which is illustrated by *Paganism* of the old religions) to its extremities. And further in detail he specifies "Churches" as settled, so as to have in them a doctrinal tradition of some standing, "in the German lands," "in the Spanish lands," "among the Celts," and in the East, in Egypt, and in Lybia, as well as in the central region of the (Roman) world.

Justin Martyr, born about the beginning of the century, flourished in Rome as a Christian teacher about the middle of it, and must have known the state of Christianity as well as any man then in the world. In his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, the record of a real debate (held at Ephesus), he says (117):—

For there is absolutely not one of the races of men, whether barbarous or Greek, or by whatever name they are called,—though it should be the waggon-dwellers, or the homeless, or cattle-feeding dwellers in tents,—among whom there are not being offered prayers and thanksgivings to the Father and Maker of all (the universe) in the name of the crucified Jesus.

We shall have occasion to see more fully what constitutes a strong corroboration of these statements of Christians, in the accounts that are given by Pliny, in A.D. 110, of the Christians of Bithynia, and by Tacitus, of the persecution of Christians under Nero in A.D. 64. Pliny was proconsul of Bithynia at the time. His account of the Christians is in an official letter to his friend and emperor, Trajan, whose answer (*rescript*) is preserved. What he describes is the state of things into which he had to make judicial inquiry, as responsible director of a "great" persecution, in which he not only received the information of informers, but took the evidence of Christians, some of them examined by torture. His report is, that the new religion has extended through the whole province, so as to embrace the population of town and

country everywhere, so as to cause an almost entire disappearance of the heathen religion. Tacitus, the great historian, states that—this was before the death of Paul—the number of those in the city of Rome found ready to die rather than deny the name of Christ was “a huge multitude” (*multitudo ingens*). There were so many of them put to death by fire alone as to light up the Crown Gardens as with torch-light, the citizens being invited to the “sport” (!).

Tacitus and Pliny both are strongly antipathetic to this “superstition,” especially on account of the “obstinacy” of the Christians in adherence to their profession at the cost of their lives. This is the only thing they have to say against them. Quite plainly they do not in the least understand them. But they are perfectly well able to count them, in estimating the magnitude of what they reckon a dangerous nuisance, as if it had been a plague of dangerous reptiles. It is startling to find Christianity in such force at Rome within some thirty years of the death of Christ. But perhaps more impressive, as indicating occupation of the world by the gospel, is the state of things in Bithynia. The conclusion suggested by this is corroborated by the Scripture history of the Apostolic age, and by what is found in general history of the third century, when Christianity is seen blending with the whole movement of the life of the world, visibly on its way to transformation of that world into a Christendom.

The Apologies which have come down to us from that time, though not then considered by “the powers” of the world which they addressed, still show to us that the Christian mind of the time was keenly exercised about the original history of Christianity. The work of Celsus (*Ἀληθὴς λόγος*) against Christianity, supposed to have been written about the middle of the second century, though not questioning, but assuming, the historical trustworthiness of the Christian records of the origin of the religion, yet shows that, in order to vindication of it against assailants, Christians had to study its original character closely in full detail. Witness the fact, that the objections made by Celsus, and answered by Origen, have continued to be, to a large extent, the stock-in-trade of infidelity, even learned infidelity, down to this day. Scholars like Strauss and Renan, ambitious to be distinguished from

the "vulgar rationalism" even of scholars, may not wish to have it generally known that their arrows are taken from the quiver of a sort of second century Tom Paine. But their grand master Baur, in the deliberate utterance of his chair (*Vorlesungen*, vol. i. p. 299, A.D. 1865), bears witness, "That Origen's book, in reproducing the work of Celsus, has continued to be a very rich storehouse for all the antagonists of Christianity even to the most recent time. It is truly striking," he remarks, "how so much of what still is continually alleged against Christianity, is to be already found in Celsus almost in the same form." Thus manifestly the age of apologetics must have been exercised earnestly about the origin of Christianity in the age immediately preceding. And Apology was not the only exercise of Christian mind in that age upon religion. The Apology was its characteristic contribution to the history of Christian thought. It is especially through its Apology that that primitive Christianity speaks to the generations following. And the primitive apologetic is eagerly studied, not only on account of the intrinsic weight of its argument, but especially, even though the argument should be intrinsically of little value, on account of its illustration of the then state of Christianity, and of the controversy as to its truth. There thus, as we saw, may arise in our mind an illusory impression of the character of the life of that period; as if the Christians had given their whole strength to the preparation and publication of Apologies, and the heathen "powers" had been very much occupied with consideration of these Apologies. But, in fact, the Apology, though most notable to us as the voice which has come to our ears through the ages from the heart of the Church in that primitive testing time, represents only one part of the life which was in that heart. And the life of Christianity in the second century was sustained by believing knowledge of what had come into the world in the first. That "power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. i. 16) was to the Christianity of the second century the very sum of all its life, the sunlike fountain of all that movement, of thought and feeling and action, which was as a wondrous new spring of life among mankind. The Christian mind dwelt in that recent past, so near, with a concentrated fulness and exclusiveness of devotional contem-

plation and devoutly exercised thought, which can be compared only to Israel's recollection of the exodus during the sojourn in the wilderness. *Hesterni sumus* thus meant most vividly fresh recollection of that origin as a thing of yesterday.

There has also to be considered, what is represented by the expression "catholic" in the testimony we have cited from Irenæus,—the solidarity, the conscious unity, of a Christian mind throughout the world in that age. We cannot too often recall the illustrations to mind. The Christians of Gaul send a public letter about their persecution to those of Asia and Phrygia, as to brethren of the same household. Polycarp, at whose feet one of those Christians has learned, wrote to the Philippians from Smyrna, and Clement of Rome wrote to the Corinthians, as one with them in the faith, and sharing with them in the noble inheritance of Paul's Epistles to those communities. Even when Irenæus falls into a weakness of fancifulness in his reasons why the number of the Gospels should have been made exactly four, he is yet—as a feather showing how the wind blows—strong for our purpose through that very weakness, demonstrating the notoriety of *the fact* that the number of the Gospels is, and always has been, exactly four, as the number of the Commandments is exactly ten. It has been noted as remarkable, that a professed scholar like Renan, inquiring as to the primitive history of the Christian Scriptures, should have ignored the office and action, for the recognition and the preservation of those Scriptures, of the Christian Church. That is an "historical" criticism which leaves out of the scale of its judgment by far the most important historical material for judgment in the case.

In the relative history of those Scriptures the commanding fact is, that they were custodied in the bosom of a Christian community, well qualified and organised for such a trust. They were cherished by the Church as her one (*κειμήλιον*) peculiar treasure, her one inheritance from the first century, placed in her keeping for all future generations. In relation to this trust, the Christian mind of that age was one great comprehensive organism, like a world-wide *net* of living souls, eagerly and keenly appreciative, devotedly retentive in love, as to the sacred fountain of men's daily life in God. A commentator on Justinian's *Institutes*, who should ignore the

existence of the Roman Empire, would not be much esteemed as an "historical" critic of the Roman law. And he deserves to fail in the search for gold, who neglects that pavement which is constructed at the bottom of the water "race," with appliances mechanical and chemical, for the very purpose of intercepting, collecting, and retaining the precious metal; and who seeks it only in the muddy waters of the "race," or in the "tailings" of mud accumulated at the end of it.

In relation to the Scriptures, the strong, flexible organisation under elders or bishops and deacons, with a distinct order of public teachers, which we see coming into existence in the Acts and the Catholic Epistles, is very important. But perhaps more important is the complete absence of the mere officialism of "Churchianity" from the Christian life of that age. The heart of the whole Christian *community* was in every part of the movement. And the measure of *realisation* which for the purpose of our inquiry can easily be attained, as to the nature of that movement, so that we shall know and feel that we are *at home* there, is very great. For that organic unity of Christian mind which extended over the second century has really extended down into our time. That which makes the Thames at London and the Seine at Paris is, after all, not pollution, but water. And by means of aqueducts the pure element can be brought to those cities from the fountains. We have such aqueducts in the literature and other authentic monuments of the second century itself, which have reached us. Thus, in any generation, a child that has learned the Apostolic Creed by heart has in his mind the deepest thought regarding the substance of Christian revelation that lived in the Christian heart of that century. And notwithstanding pollutions, primitive Christianity has come down as a great stream, in unbroken continuity, like that of the Thames or the Seine, through the ages of Christian history in the world.

America is distant from Britain as many thousands of miles as there are centuries between us and the primitive age of apologetics. But a Briton can to a large extent place himself at home in Anglo-Saxon America by means of telegraphic and other communications from beyond the Atlantic. And for comprehension of such intimations he is qualified by

a sympathetic intelligence arising out of kinsmanship, and a basis of Anglo-Saxon life rooted in history, which he has in common with residents in that far land, from New York to San Francisco, and from Halifax to New Orleans. The basis of historical Christian life and thought, which Christians of the nineteenth century have in common with those of the second,—a communion reaching (Heb. xi.—xii.) as far as righteous Abel beyond the Flood,—is much more profoundly vital and comprehensive than any that can arise out of the temporal political relationships of mankind. And, while the extant monuments of the second century give us, for study of the first, an advantage like that which residence in the United States would give us for study of the American Revolution, the *nearness* of the second century to the primæval Christianity places us as an Englishman, inquiring into the settlement in our time of the Colony of Victoria, would be placed by residence in Melbourne, the capital of that colony. For, indeed, the second-century Christianity is the first-century Christianity, after it has taken one step from the threshold of its original home in time.

CHAPTER I.

THE RELIGION OUTWARDLY, OVERCOMING THE WORLD.

SEC. 1. *Outline.*

IN the second century, the world-empire of Nebuchadnezzar's majestic image had become thoroughly established in strength upon its iron feet. The Roman power was consolidated, as it never had been before, in a compact strength of greatness which it never possessed again. It had as emperors in that century a succession of really great magistrates, such as has not appeared in one state within a like period in any other epoch of human history. The world's heritages of older civilisation were now collected, the Egyptian, the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Græco-Macedonian, within the domain of Rome. There was embraced in that domain a new world, to the west and north of Europe, which, by the more ancient empires, had not been so much as known, or had been but barely heard of. And all was organised and wielded by the Roman strength, in a civilisation distinctively of disciplined force and law, as compared with which the strength of earlier empires had been only as gold, or silver, or brass (Egypt, when tried, had proved to be but a "broken reed"). The chief magistrate of this fourth monarchy was worshipped as a deity on earth,—perhaps more sincerely, as an omnipresent reality of power for good or evil, than any of the unseen "gods" of heathenism in the world.

That image, so established, was (Dan. ii. 31–34) smitten on its feet, that were of iron and of clay, so that the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold were broken to pieces together, and became as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them. The utter demolition was by means of a

von image v. 31-34
demolition of Rome,

shapeless thing, a stone cut out without hands, which became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. Christianity was that shapeless thing. It began with a young carpenter in Palestine, who was crucified there at the instance of his own people, in his early prime of life. It went on after his death in an obscure society of his followers, under some fishermen, a publican, and later on a tent-maker. And it overcame the world, in that greatest of world empires; and filled the whole earth, so that Christendom, the fifth monarchy, is another name for that power which now visibly has no rival among mankind, in its movement toward the completion of supremacy on earth. Julian's dying utterance, "Galilean, thou hast conquered," was a true confession, that the old empire of heathenism had gone for ever from the world, and that the sovereignty of Christ was established upon earth as immovably as the stars are in the firmament.

The word *pagan*, which natively meant "villager" or "rustic," thus came into a new use; which meant that the old superstitions would now no longer live, except in the half-believing imagination of country people, perhaps—like our "spiritualism"—retaining a malignant potency of delusion in excitable organisations without power of solid belief. But in reality of power in the open air of man's life, "the religions" were gone, or effete, unless among "barbarians from the north," in whose mind they were destined to perish in the south, like snows that have wandered into the sun. "The gods" were dead, the oracles were dumb, the idols were cast unto the owls and the bats. The idolatries were coming to be antiquated hobgoblins of which the remembered life was now only a faint abhorrence. Those grand imposing "religions" of the great historical peoples, which but yesterday had filled the world, and towered up to heaven, were vanished completely, so as to have left no trace except in the memory of antiquarians. Not one of their gods is now so much as disbelieved in by any creature under heaven. Whether a new paganism might not arise within the Church, out of that worldliness which is the paganism of the heart, the dying Apostate may not have asked himself.

Philosophy had not shown itself much in the real campaign, as claiming an empire of the mind exclusive of this new

Ref. to Julian: Tardieu v. 14157i
Galilee.

wisdom of God, except in alliance with worldly powers, until Christianity came to be the winning side, when philosophy went over to Christianity. When it became Christian, some thought that its riches had become Egyptian spoils, adornments (*ἀναθήματα*) for the temple of God. But it early began to be feared by earnest believers that, while ostensibly philosophy was Christianised, really Christianity was being paganised; seeing that even Christian teachers were coming to be, while Christian in word, pagan in thought: *χριστιανίζουσι μὲν τῇ φωνῇ, τοῖς δὲ δόγμασιν Ἑλληνίζουσι* (Socrates, *Hist. Eccles.* i. 22). It remained to be seen whether (Col. ii. 8) philosophy was to become a spoiler of the Christians, "through vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of this world, and not after Christ." We know that there was no fatal necessity of this; for there were philosophers who became Christian when Christianity was toilsome and perilous; and there has been a truly Christian philosophy:—the greatest of commentators on Aristotle was Thomas Aquinas, "the angel of the schools." But there was a possibility of that "spoiling." There has been a nominally Christian rationalism which means, more or less, complete rejection of supernaturalism in revelation and in redemption; and immediately after Constantine's accession, the first Œcumenical Council (A.D. 325) had to deal with a doctrine which implies that the Redeemer is not true God. But at the time of his accession (A.D. 313) there was no such remaining opposition of avowedly heathen philosophy as to prevent it from being the general fact, that Christianity had now come into command of the world.

That fact was not made by Constantine, but found by him and used by him. His dream or vision of the cross, with its *τούτῳ νικάς, hoc vinces*, "Be victor through this," may, like Nebuchadnezzar's great tree which overspread the earth, have been a distinct presentation to his mind in the night, of what he had obscurely perceived or divined through the day. To his political insight it may have appeared that, in the then precarious balance of forces in the empire, Christianity might be that which could be employed to turn the scale in his favour; so that his acceptance of the cross may have been a sample of "lowliness is young ambition's ladder." What affects our inquiry is the fact that, at this momentous crisis

"Paganism 'mysticism'"
 "Aristo"

for all time, the new religion had come to be, not only a considerable force, but really the only considerable vital force in the empire of the world. 18

The army is not a vital force, but a weapon, to be wielded by him who holds the nation's force of mind. And when Constantine made his fateful choice, the Christians really were a vital force. Though they still were only a small proportion of the whole population, and were not organised into the forceful unity of a political "state within the state," yet they were everywhere in some strength of numbers and influence. Over all they were very numerous. They were of one heart and one mind in a great public interest, which depended on the course of political action at this crisis. They were individually intelligent, energetic, enterprising, as if a new race of men had appeared upon earth in a degenerate mankind. And from generations of fiery trial they had contracted a disciplined habit of "enduring as in sight of the invisible God"—shrinking from no peril, and fainting under no toil. In such a case, "one man shall chase a thousand." The faith which was in them, though it should have been theologically a delusion, was fitted to be effectively the victory which overcometh the world. And that was the thing which put it in the power of him, who had the Christians on his side, to become the world's commander. Xth natural
199-220
it's a grief

Constantine's accession was the erection of a trophy; but the victory had been virtually achieved long before; and the real strain of battle was in the second century. In the third century there were fierce persecutions of the new religion, with deliberate endeavours to destroy it from the earth. But the attempt, when made, was all but confessedly in desperation; like the violence of a demon that is being cast out of possession. Tertullian saw the beginning of the end when he cried, You will not hear us, because you fear that if you listened you should feel constrained to approve what you are resolved to destroy. If that was so, they must have begun to feel that they were fighting against God. Much more, at a later time, say fifty years after, at the time of another "great" African persecution. In Carthage again there is persecution, and many suffer death, one of whom, at last, is the famous statesman Bishop Cyprian. But that bishop, though overcome, hobz

was formidable to Imperial Rome. And the religion is now so deeply and widely rooted in the land, that her armed violence of legions can no more avail for extirpation of it than a wind-storm could avail for extirpation of the spring. There is persecution also at Alexandria, the second city in the world. But there Christianity has attained to such maturity of strength, that its theological school has a world-wide reputation. Origen, at this time a teacher there, we have heard of as the most celebrated scholar of his age. As for the rank and file of ordinary Christians, the temper of their faith has been evinced, *e.g.* by the response that was made to a proclamation, that those who are Christians should come forward openly, when the whole population of a city or a region came forward to make open profession at the peril of life; and not less significantly by the formidable schism, which was occasioned in the Church by many Christians resolving that no man who shrank from confession at the peril of his life should ever again be owned as a Christian. By this time, at the middle of the third century, the endeavour to suppress Christianity by force, even all the giant power of Rome, had become really and sensibly hopeless. The Christians had become not only great in number, and powerful through intelligence, but through influence of character were now coming to be understood. Their "endurance" of persecutions had brought into view the existence in their cause of a *spiritual force*, transcendental in its nature, against which all temporal policy and weapons were perceptibly futile, as an army would be powerless against the winds and the light.

When we think of human sufferings in persecution, we ought not to forget the sufferings of the persecutors. The spirit of the book, *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, which appeared only when the long-protracted agony was near its close, a spirit of willingness to see persecutors followed by manifest vengeance of God, does not appear to have been shared by the Christians of the earlier time. And we ought to remember that the persecutors may have suffered very cruelly through inward operation of the feelings which broke out in persecuting, such as a panic rage of terror, with mistaken conscience toward God. Such a terror went before Israel's conquest of Canaan (Deut. vii. 20; Josh. xxiv. 12),—the very heart of

heathenism failing it for fear. Before Christ came, a vague anticipation had arisen in the East that one appearing in Judea was to attain to sovereignty of the world. A presentiment of doom, in the spirit of Pilate's wife's dream, may early have begun to be as a shadow upon the heart of heathen "powers." A premonitory instinct of divination that the cause was lost, destined to perish before this new advancing power, may have occasioned a gloomy desperation in view of that advancing, such as had never been seen before, irresistible as the progress of the spring; advancing with a power apparently illimitable, as that of those elemental forces which heave in the earthquake and smite in the thunderbolt. The very ferocity of the later persecutions may have been inspired by such desperation, fierce because helpless, in the endeavour to conceal itself by violence; the fury of a blind Polyphemus in bewilderment of impotency; the fierceness of a panic terror, as when a householder on his threshold frantically battles against the entrance of a malady that is worse than death, while in his heart he knows he can do nothing to protect his loved ones from the invading plague. Christians enduring persecution were the anvil, and heathens inflicting it were the hammer: the anvil was not broken, but the hammer was; and there no doubt was cruel suffering in the infliction as well as in the enduring of the stroke.

The real strain of battle was in the second century; because in that century heathenism was not hopeless in its heart, and Christianity, a Hercules in infancy, had not yet made full proof of its own invincible power of endurance. But far back in the first century there had been a precursory trial of strength, in which the nature of the impending warfare of the persecutions was brought with startling vividness into view. Tacitus, one of the greatest masters of moral historical painting, appears to have thrown the whole force of his genius into his delineation of the monster Emperor Nero's reign, in which every whisper seems even now to have distinctness of thrilling horror for mankind. And in his grand picture of that reign, the most memorably startling detail is that of the great fire by which Rome was all but destroyed. There was a suspicion that the fire was really kindled in a mad freak by the Emperor. And it has been supposed that he threw the

Reasons for bitterness of persecutions was that the heathen saw that the old was going place to the new and nobly.

suspicion of incendiarism on the Christians, in order to turn it aside from himself. Tacitus depicts their suffering as follows (*Annal.* xv. 44):—

He ascribes the Christians' endurance to "obstinacy," which he accounts for by their being, on principle, enemies of mankind. Waxing theological, because his grand picture needs deep colouring here, he speaks of their religion as a "pernicious superstition." Dropping into history, he intimates that the movement, beginning in Judea, was at first repressed, but broke out again, and travelled not only over Judea, but through the world, and even through all Rome (not the Jewish quarter merely); so that, upon information of those first apprehended, a huge multitude (*multitudo ingens*) were convicted. Their death punishment included mocking tortures, some being covered with skins of animals to induce the savage beasts to rend them; some crucified; some burned to death;—the night was made luminous for "sports" to the people in the imperial gardens, with the flames of Christian torture.

Such was the first of the "great" persecutions (A.D. 64), in the continuance of which, as we saw, it is understood that the Apostle Paul, and probably Peter, suffered martyrdom. Hitherto, though there had been local persecutions, and rabblings by the populace in the interest of the world's religions, the empire had not distinctly taken cognisance of Christianity as anything but a new movement of Judaism. In this Neronian persecution it was, for the first time on the empire's part, dealt with in clear distinctness as a new religion of Christ. And this first "great" persecution, on the part of the world empire, may thus be regarded as the world's declaration of war to the death against Christianity, in a dreadful act of hostility to be followed up by others from generation to generation, until the new religion had so far made way to victory definitive that the empire became professedly a Christendom or domain of Christ (cp. Rev. xi. 15).

In connection with that warfare, we must remember that in course of it the persecuting world itself was being brought into obedience of the faith. A circumstance mentioned by Tacitus shows that the violence, by Nero intended for directing popular hatred against the Christians, so far not only missed its mark, but frustrated his purpose, by occasioning sympathy; the people, he says, reflecting that it was sad that

suffering so dire should be inflicted for the cruel pleasure of one man. The steadfast endurance of the martyrs, men ordinarily of humblest condition, and in some cases even women, and, it is to be feared, children, in undergoing death most frightful for the "name" of Christ, was an argument that must have reached many hearts with the impression that here was a new spiritual power in the life of mankind as of a kingdom not of this world. And such impression, working conviction, might bring about conversion through leading to inquiry and so to ascertainment of the truth. So, in fact, it passed into a proverb, that the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church. Along with the infamy of that horrible torchlight in the public gardens of Rome, there in the heart of its empire, there shone upon the world the new light of true life to mankind, from the faith and hope and love that sustained the martyrs in their strange unearthly "endurance" (*ὑπομονή*, the N.T. for "patience").

In the narrative, and still more in the comment of the historian, we see a first illustration of that strange misapprehension of the nature of this new religion, which all through the history of its warfare has been a presumptive evidence of its unworldliness, and a clear proof of the worldliness of the world as "lying in wickedness." The people, though perhaps damped for a moment by the view of human suffering, and appalled by the terrific manifestation of a tyrant's power to inflict it at his pleasure, yet took part in the "sport." Not long after, a poet (Martial, *Epigr.* x. 5) could serve up the recollection of the most frightful of the tortures as a seasoning of his melodious verse for the jaded appetite of the refined,—

Nam cum dicatur, tunicâ presente molestâ, etc.,—

where the *tunicâ molestâ* is understood to mean the oil-soaked garment by means of which the torture of innocent men became a torchlight for popular entertainment. Among the mass of the people, the cry of *Christianos ad leones* ("to the lions with the Christians!") by and by came to be heard at Rome like their *panes et circences* ("bread and sports"). The loafing mendicants of the empire, idle, seedy patriots of the street corner, whose voice was thus lifted up, were not of the

true breed of old Roman citizenship, but a scum of humanity collecting in that corruption which perhaps was not a fair sample of the world even as "lying in the wicked one." But all over the empire, through a series of generations, the masses of the people were often found to be in persecuting rage in advance of the magistrate, and to be ready to supplement his regulated industry by the violence of their rabbling, pillaging, murdering, and worse outrage, where they were let loose to have their own way of serving the gods. It was not in Rome only that the populace was found offering this worship, and working out that heathenish righteousness, while gratifying the personal lusts of cruelty and greed. The spirit of the original "Crucify him! crucify him!" was by a grand experiment shown to be ruling in the heart of the whole world, while the persecuted Christians were in the darkness of that world "blameless and harmless, the sons of God . . . shining as lights, holding forth the word of life" (Phil. ii. 15).

Tacitus was a really great master of history, and especially of moral criticism in historical representation. But his representation of this matter is a memorably impressive illustration of the statement, "the world by wisdom knew not God." The mere monstrosity of cruelty was not, in Nero's reign, the specialty, for a philosophical historian, of that startling event. The amazing thing was the endurance of such suffering by "a huge multitude" of ordinary human beings on behalf of their religion. Yet the religion, which has by mankind been found to be a love-light of heaven for new life of purity and happiness to men, was to this masterly historian's apprehension only a vile malignant superstition invincibly "obstinate" through having, deeply rooted in the heart of it, a principle of hatred to mankind!

It is curiously significant that in his moral reasoning at this vital point there is a strange incoherence, as if he had not taken the trouble of really thinking what he says, but had, for the sake of saying something striking, adding an impressive touch to his grand historical picture, jumbled together in his ostensibly judicial utterance the contradictory gossipings of two idlers whom he has listened to successively in passing on the street. Nero, accepting the calumny, that the Christians were haters of mankind, might reason co-

Perhaps.

herently — though overstrainedly — toward the conclusion, that consequently they had burned Rome. But the great historian's representation is that, in consequence of their hatred of mankind, they persisted, with invincible obstinacy, in burning — themselves! In other words, the great historian here is blind. Yet the real nature of the religion could by this time be easily ascertained by him. His friends Pliny and Trajan are in correspondence about that very matter as under judicial investigation in Bithynia. All three of them might, without being very aged men, have in their early life heard the religion expounded at Rome by one who gave his life for it, and was far the greatest man that Rome has ever seen. During the half-century that has intervened, Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and other Christian writings, have been before the public, in the hands of men who have no desire to hide their principles or practices "in a corner" (Acts xxvi. 26). The "huge multitude" of Nero's victims must now have abundantly numerous successors in Rome, whom the historian passes every day upon the street, and any one of whom (cp. 1 Pet. iii. 15) would gladly give him correct information. Yet, of real information he manifestly has nothing. Of real historical insight he, in this case, appears to be simply incapable. And he is no vulgar slanderer, who might be expected to echo mere popular rumours about a "sect everywhere spoken against." He is, according to his lights, a just man of the very highest ability, and notable for a lofty scorn of wrong. The suggestion thus is pressed upon us by himself, that in relation to this thing the light which is in him is darkness, and that his blindness toward it is worldliness (2 Cor. iv. 4), evincing a new nature of this thing as unworldly.

Gibbon (*Decline and Fall*) has a jaunty generalisation to the effect, that all the religions were regarded by the peoples as equally true, by the philosophers as equally false, and by the magistrates as equally useful. We may observe generally, that what this philosophical historian really says, in the famous chapter in which he endeavours to account for the success of Christianity on the supposition that it is not of God, is in effect only, in a grandiose way, under a variety of heads, that "there is nothing so successful as success." His

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"secondary causes" of the success are, upon close inspection, seen to have no light of explanation in them excepting on the view, that Christianity *has already succeeded* in making itself a force, resistless as the sunshine, in the heart and life of men. And the jaunty generalisation we have cited has in it an incoherence like that of Tacitus.

First, if the peoples believed *all* the religions to be true, and the magistrates believed them all to be useful, why did the peoples and the magistrates combine in persecuting *this* religion to the death? As for the philosophers, we need not here inquire: with some exceptions which will be considered by us in due time, their part in that great campaign, of the world's life in the truth, did not go beyond a sort of skirmishing light-horsemanship, keeping well out of the way of fire, and other possibility of harm to their skins. But, second, if the philosophers believed all the religions to be false, and the magistrates believed them to be useful,—that is to say, did not believe them,—then how can it be that the peoples believed them to be true?

The "philosophers" were the recognised exponents and guides of enlightened opinion among mankind; the only public instructors, whether in lectures, or through dramatic representations, or in books. They were in place of all that we have in the pulpit, the press, and the platform. *They were* the peoples, thinking, or trying to think, speculatively, for the formation of right opinion about things. And the magistrates *were* the peoples, thinking, or trying to think, practically, for guidance to right administration of public affairs.

Gibbon's generalisation is thus historically a flimsy mistake, as well as effectively fallacious if not sophistical. In the populations to which the gospel came there was a real "solidarity," such that (cp. Ps. ii. 1, etc.) in them we see "the world," of mankind as it then was, brought into contact with the religion of Christ; so that the population in all its classes was implicated in the opposition to that religion. On the one hand, the disbelief toward the old religions, which was conspicuous in the philosophers and ruling in the magistrates,—who were the ministers of those religions,—had for centuries been widespread among the commonalty of the peoples. On the other hand, as we shall see, the

magistrates, and the philosophers too, were upon trial by this new thing, found to have in them, as a root of bitterness springing up to defile, a remaining superstition which gave to the persecutions a fire-edge of *odium theologicum*. The fiercest of all the great persecutions was under the chief magistracy of Marcus Aurelius "the philosopher," whom Gibbon and others are almost ready to worship, *although*—for one must say a striking thing, though it should wound a friend—he gives him the frightful description of being all at once "a priest, an atheist, and a god." Behind all what we see is, a *worldliness* in the heart of mankind, of which (cp. 1 John iii. 13; John xv. 16, 17) the antagonism to this new religion is presumptive evidence of unworldliness in the "stranger."

The persecutions are significant mainly as bringing into view *the heart of the world in relation to Christianity*. The mere blunders, therefore, of persecutors, though they should be very tragic in effect on human happiness, are for us not significant, because they do not spring from human character. But there may be mistakes, misconceptions, whose existence or whose prevalence is to be accounted for by some perversity of heart, though it should be only dulness or insensibility; which, indeed, is perhaps the worst of all perversities,—a heart of stone where there ought to be a heart of flesh. And it is at least a question whether the worldliness of the world has ever been exhibited more decisively than in *the three stock accusations* against this new religion, which took shape in the popular imagination almost as soon as the religion had showed its face to the world, and which continued to influence the feeling and action of men toward Christianity long after these "calumnies" had been hundreds of times exposed.

1. The leading accusation (or "calumny") was that the Christians were *atheists*. The occasion of it was, their not worshipping the heathen "gods,"—not even the emperors,—and their having no images of deity, nor other visible object of worship. Yet a heathen wise man could perceive, notwithstanding his deep antipathy to the general character of the Jews, an impressive sublimity in their worship, in that they made use of no visible symbol of deity, but simply adored the Unseen. The sublimity of the conception of an

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omnipresent invisible God, the Creator and Ruler of all, seems to have impressed him with a certain feeling of awe, or at least respect, toward that people which had in its life a thought so deep and high. But Christianity, with its realisation of the living God in Christ, made upon mankind an impression of "atheism." The world's religions, with their idolatrous forms, are an impressive demonstration (Acts xvii.) of man's ignorance, in his worldliness, of that Godhead which is worshipped. Perhaps a more deeply significant evidence of men's being "without God in the world," was constituted by that accusation of "atheism" against the Christians on account of their simplicity of worship. The accusation could not have taken a strong hold of the popular mind if the heart of the peoples had not been "ungodly," as that wicked world which rejected the prophecy of Enoch before the Flood.

2. The same condition of nature was manifested by the two other popular accusations about "Œdipean intercourse" and "Thyestean feasts." The confessors, not allowed to "apologise," or give detailed explanation of the real nature of their calumniated religion, would sometimes ejaculate, so to speak: "We are not atheists: we are not evil-doers" (cp. 1 Pet. iii. 16). The "evil-doing" to which they specially referred was that imputed to them in the rumours about secret practice of abominations at their meetings for worship. The rumours appear to have risen, in the dark impure heathen heart, from misapprehension of what individuals may have heard among or from the Christians themselves. Thus the caricature of a Christ crucified with the head of an ass (some such thing was often *spoken* of among the heathens) may have been what came to be in the heathen mind in place of the noble gospel story of the approach of Jesus to Jerusalem, in that modest pomp which was so swiftly followed by the crucifixion. The "Thyestean feasting" meant that Christians in their meetings partook of bread in which was baken the flesh of murdered infants,—a "calumny" which may have been occasioned by the words of institution of the Supper, "Take, eat, this is my body broken for you," perhaps in combination with the words about "eating the flesh of the Son of man and drinking His

blood." The absurdity of the accusation makes it difficult for us to realise the horror of being so suspected, for those to whom the reputation of purity in life was dearer than life itself, because affecting the honour of their Lord. And the situation thus created was not less terrible than horrible. For a populace believing such a thing about this society must have been ready at any moment to break out into a very madness of murderously pitiless rage.

3. The accusation about "Œdipean intercourse" was what was referred to by the Confessors when they said sometimes, "It is *you* who do such things: *therefore* it is that you think of them in connection with us." The things referred to were impurities which are nameless among Christians. But they were familiar to the heathens, in the practice even of their philosophers, not excepting Socrates himself. Things of like nature were, and are, found even in close connection with the religions of the heathen, frequenting the precincts of their temples, if not the very shrines of their gods. The occasion of this "calumny" appears to have been the Christian profession of "brotherly love" to all, perhaps in connection with the kiss of charity, the seal of that new Christian affection. The profession of brotherly love to all was to the heathen mind so strange a thing, that they could not account for it excepting on the supposition of its being employed as a cloak for abominations, the foulest that can sully humanity. The fact that such accusations were made, and really credited, appears to disclose an awful depth of impurity in the heart of the world as it then was. How is it now? Calumnies, really as absurd as these, but adjusted to the changed conditions, are at this hour habitually uttered with reference to real Christianity, and credited by worldly men. And now, as then, they appear to show that real Christianity is not of the world, which "loves its own." It is an unworldly thing, not known by the world, which "speaks evil of what it knows not." But why should men *speak evil* of that which they do not comprehend? How comes it that if there be a call for some theory or explanation of a strange thing, they are ready to think of *evil* as the explanation, and to believe in that evil when it has suggested itself among the "thoughts of the imaginations" of a calumnious "heart"? We thus

are led to look for some *theory of the persecutions* as exhibiting the real heart of the world toward Christianity, that shall quadrate with the supposition that Christianity is of God. And it may be suggested as a theory, that *this religion is unworldly, and the world is worldly*—worldliness being what was known as “ungodliness” when Enoch prophesied before the Flood.

For detailed illustration of the contrast of the worldliness which this religion met to the unworldliness of its own characteristic aspect, we may look at the world as it appeared in the persecutions under the three aspects set forth in Gibbon’s jaunty generalisation, of the *statesman*, the religious *people*, and the *philosopher*. These classes we shall see coming into prominence respectively in three “great” persecutions—1. Of the *Bithynian* Christians (A.D. 110) as exhibited in Pliny’s letter to Trajan; 2. Of the *Smyrncæan* Christians (A.D. 155), made memorable by the martyrdom of Polycarp (cp. Rev. ii. 9, 10); and 3. Of the Christians of *Lyons and Vienne* (A.D. 177), under government of “the philosopher” Marcus Aurelius.

SEC. 2. *Conflict with worldly magistracy (Bithynian persecution).*

This is the first appearance of Christianity on the theatre of the world’s history after the apostolic age, only ten years after the death of the last of the apostles. Pliny is nephew of that Pliny, author of the great work on *Natural History*, who, in his too eager pursuit of knowledge, perished in that eruption of Vesuvius which buried the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum. The younger Pliny, a personal friend of “the good” Emperor Trajan and of the great historian Tacitus, appears to have been worthy of their friendship. He is represented to us by a collection of his letters, one of which, to Trajan, describes the judicial proceedings relatively to the Christians in his Bithynian proconsulate. The persecution was not originated of his motion, but seems rather to have been thrust upon him by unwelcome necessity of his position as magistrate. We remember that an earlier letter to those same Bithynians, the First Epistle of Peter (i. 1), is one of the Scriptures of our received Canon. And we will in due time

make copious use of that Epistle for illustration of the inward nature of this new religion. But at the present stage we will, in Pliny's letter, only seek illustration of its outward aspect, and the effect of that aspect as "a sign that shall be spoken against, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." The contents of this famous letter, with Trajan's rescript, were as follows:—

The persecution is in progress. The new religion must have been long planted here: some of those called in question on account of it say, that they have discontinued the profession of it for as many as twenty years. The Christians now are very numerous, not only in the cities, but out in country villages and farms: so far has this gone, that the temples are deserted, the festivals have been in large measure discontinued, and there are hardly any purchasers for sacrifices. Apparently informers put the magistrate under a necessity of taking action, where action means death. The number of persons thus brought into peril is formidably great. They are of all ranks and both sexes, and apparently children are not safe. For the purpose of obtaining information, there have been examined under torture two women, whom Pliny describes as slaves (*ancillæ*): perhaps he is misled by the word which the Christians employ, *ministri* (*διάκονοι* may have been the Greek, and the women may have been *deaconesses*). The Christians are invincibly "obstinate" (and, finally, "contumacious"); that is to say, they will not "blaspheme Christ" (*Christum maledicere*), nor worship what they do not believe to be God—*e.g.* the image of Trajan! Their religion is (*superstitio prava et immodica*) a dangerous, gloomy pietism (Pliny, like Tacitus, waxes theological where he knows nothing). The vital process of their trial, resulting in demonstration of "obstinaey" and "contumacy," is this: They are asked, Are you a Christian? When they answer that they are, and adhere to their profession, they are interrogated, with threats, a second and a third time. Still persisting, they are punished with death. The only denial of Christ was apparently on the part of those who said, either that they had *never been* professing Christians, or, that they had discontinued the profession *some years before* this time. These, in evidence of the sincerity of their denial (oath of purgation), "blasphemed Christ," and offered incense and wine to a deity in worship,—Pliny setting the example while prescribing the formula. *Of those who were professing Christians at the time, it does not appear that so much as one sought to escape from death by abjuring the religion of Christ.*

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110 AD.

Trajan's answer ("rescript") was to the following effect:—

Pliny's action hitherto is approved. He is to be as little harsh as may be consistently with carrying the law into effect. Informers are not to be encouraged; and no criminal information is to be received but in writing, subscribed with the informer's name. The essential point of Pliny's letter was an inquiry, whether a man is to suffer for Christianity if there be no other alleged offence. The imperial answer is clear: Those who are accused and convicted of open Christianity must be punished, unless they deny that they are professing Christians, and give proof of their sincerity by worshipping the gods; if they do this, they are to be pardoned.

Here again, as in Tacitus, we observe a curious incoherence of moral judgment. They are to be pardoned—for what? For what they deny, and have disproved, with a disproof that is accepted by authority:—"not guilty, but he must not do it any more" (?). This is the first of popish bulls: the emperor was by law the *Pontifex Maximus*, "sovereign pontiff," the true original "Paip, that pagan full of pride." And this primæval popish bull appears to be morally a sort of Irish bull.

We have hitherto examined no witness about *the character of those early Christians*. Pliny has made searching inquiry which bears upon that. We may suppose that the Christians themselves have been frank. Two women have confessed whatever can be wrung out of weakness by torture. The informers are sure to make known whatever can be ascertained to the discredit of the Christians in their life before the world. And the apostates, who know about their private life of Christian fellowship, are not likely to speak more favourably of it than strict truth will warrant. What, then, in this judicial investigation, has been detected by these keen eyes of Roman inquisition? Nothing but a *blameless outward life toward man*, and within the society, a *strangely simple purity in worship of God*. We resume the account of Pliny's letter:—

The manner of their religious service is this (we—not Pliny—may preface it with the expression of their lately deceased neighbour, the Apostle John, "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day"): On a stated day (*stato die*), before the morning light, they engage in an exercise which Pliny describes

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Cyprian the accusation
is a proof of depravity

as *invicem dicere carmen* to Christ as God (or "as a god"—*Christo quari deo*). *Carmen* is ordinarily a hymn or song; but it may be a measured *prose* expression of solemn religious feeling. The *invicem* seems to mean "responsively." That might be, in the way of ordinary congregational singing, with perhaps a precentor "giving out the line;" or, of a minister's address, the people answering "Amen!" or of brotherly exhortations, one taking up the word after another; or, simply, of solemn reading of the Scriptures, perhaps "verse about." The point is, that it is a joint act of worship "to Christ as God." After that, there comes a singularly simple original *Primitive Solemn League and Covenant*. They engage together by a military oath (*sacramento*—the first recorded use of "sacrament") of God—to do what? Simply, to be guilty of no such thing as theft, robbery, impurity, falsehood, breach of trust: in other words, to be conscientiously careful about *main, plain, common duties of man to man*. The enumeration of particulars looks as if this exercise of covenanting had consisted in a solemn recital of the *Ten Commandments*, with a renewal of the engagement to "keep this law," under the Commander described in Ex. xx. 1, 2. Pliny, if one of his witnesses should lay the Decalogue before him in evidence, might pay no attention to the precepts of the *first* table, as only a meaningless visionary thing (e.g. the third Commandment; think of any one's not, without special cause, naming "the gods!"—you might as well bid a man live without breathing). But, apart from speculation about what might be, we here see as a fact, on the first appearance of this religion before the world away from the apostles, a *grand simplicity of covenanting*, to be conscientiously careful about main plain duties of man to his neighbour, the "bond" of the primitive covenanters (a very good bond!). Pliny further intimates that they have been in the habit of holding another meeting later in the day for jointly partaking of an innocent meal; but that this is now discontinued by them, on account of the publication (by Pliny for Bithynia) of an imperial prohibition of meetings of the *hetæriæ*.

These *hetæriæ* were unions, like our friendly societies or brotherhoods, which also served a social purpose of fellowship like that of the Church. They could be used for political purposes; whence there might be jealousy in relation to them on the part of the Romans or of the emperor. The edict against meetings of secular associations of that kind, was probably not intended to bear upon the Christian assemblies, which were provided against otherwise. But the

Christians, rather than openly violate the letter of the law, voluntarily discontinued their after-morning assemblies Pliny thus, perhaps intentionally, suggests an *answer to the calumnies* against them in connection with their meeting otherwise than in daylight. It was not that they desired secrecy for the doing of works of darkness. They could have candle-light on earth (cp. Rev. xxii. 5). The heathen rumour that *they put out the lights* at the opening of their meeting is a pure invention of the impure heathen heart. The reason of their meeting otherwise than by daylight is, that they wish to avoid, so far as they can avoid, open violation of the law. The significance of the statement about the common meal, that it was *innocent*, may be understood by the "calumny" about Thyestæan feasts. And Pliny's notice of their worship "to Christ as God" is effectively an answer to the accusation of "atheism." His letter probably made an end of real serious belief in the "calumnies" on the part of well-informed magistrates, though Athenagoras answers them two generations later in an Apology to M. Aurelius.

Their scrupulous obedience to the magistrate, where that obedience, though it should be distressingly inconvenient, was practicable without violence to the law of their religion, is to be noted by us in this case of Bithynia; especially because in this case there comes distinctly into view, as the outstanding specialty of the aspect of the Bithynian endurance, *an absolute refusal to obey the magistrate*; the leading aspect of unworldliness, on the part of the new religion in this case, was its assertion of the *authority* of God, as excluding the magistrates' authority, like the sunrise causing disappearance of the stars in its brightness. Napoleon I. said to the French Protestant deputies, "where conscience begins, my authority is at an end." But even in professedly Christian communities there is to be found the worldliness of placing man in authority, where God alone has right to be, in matters of religion. In the cases, however, of Erastianism and Popery, the claimant professes to be himself under law to God, a civil or spiritual vicar of Christ. The heathen magistrate made no such pretension. *The state, simply as the state, claimed to have authority in religion, as if it had power of right to command "the gods."* So there came out clear and simple, as the question

accused
of non-observance
of law.

was ever religiously
conscientious

of life or death, whether it is right to obey man rather than God.

The apostles, in absolutely refusing (Acts v. 29) to obey man at the cost of disobeying God, may be regarded as taking a position in defence of *liberty of conscience*, and so far of *the nature of the soul as rationally free* in the highest relations. Napoleon's concession to the French Protestants involved the permitted existence within his empire of a spiritual empire which is coextensive with all the life of man. There is no part of human life (cp. 1 Cor. x. 31) that is not capable of becoming under some aspect a matter of religion; so that a "soldier of God" may choose to suffer an infamous death rather than wear on his head a laurel crown which he is willing to carry in his hand. This was fully understood by the English Puritans when they migrated into America "to serve God." And it was seen in the effect of the great Puritan movement, in which vindication of political freedom went along with that of liberty of worship; as Israel's exodus, to serve their God in the wilderness, was (Bunsen says) the beginning of history, of free national life, to mankind. Christianity so far said to the peoples, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free;" "if the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed." In introducing a principle which leads to free nationality of life, it provided for cherishing individuality in full formation, and for the disintegration, the melting away, of that heathen imperialism, wide as the world, in which the individual was lost as a rain-drop in the ocean, and individuality of natural and provincial life was checked and chilled as vegetation is by the neighbourhood of an iceberg. But the principle itself was distinctively religious. What the apostles, too, sought was freedom "to serve God." Directly and positively the great principle of Christianity here is that of spiritual freedom, under the specific form of a sovereignty of God in Christ which makes a kingdom distinct from the kingdoms of this world, and which absolutely excludes dominion of temporal magistracy in the sphere of religious worship. Christ Himself had come into the world, and died on the cross, as "*the King of the Jews.*" The gospel which was to be carried to all nations was a "*gospel of the kingdom.*" And Christians had no

So in every
battle of
conscience

alternative but either to practise an absolute independence of temporal magistracy in matters of religion, or to deny Christ, whom they worshipped "as God."

Further, their practice of religion was to be in *open profession*. They were not merely to cherish the "name" of Christ in their hearts, but to bear it on their foreheads: to confess the gospel before men, as well as believe it in their own minds. The propagandism of Christianity was only one detailed mode of the open profession of it, now that the time had come for proclamation of the offer of repentance and remission of sins to all nations in the name of Christ. The rebel world was summoned to come into the peace of God the King. In fact, we know that *open profession* was precisely the point of collision of Christianity with the heathen powers, and of its contendings through suffering unto death for the new life of the world. There, in *confession* of Christ at His bidding, was the practical *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ*, on which effectively depended the continuance of the true religion as a reality of life and power among men. And, standing in that sacred Thermopylæ, the Christians had no alternative but either to die in obedience to their King, or to abandon His religion in order to save their life of the body.

Lardner is severe upon Pliny for his attempting to terrify the Christians into denying Him whom they believed to be the only God and Saviour. The proconsul appears to have aimed at dealing with them justly and for their own good. His judicial investigation completely cleared them of the shameful calumnies against their moral character. And in his letter there appears to be an underlying wistfulness on his part that Trajan, to whose imperial judgment there lies the last appeal, should authorise a lenity in application of the law not really consistent with the intention of the law. This is all the more to Pliny's credit, because the circumstances were not natively fitted to incline him favourably toward the Christians.

Their "obstinacy," and final "contumacy," must have appeared to him as constituting a very grave peril to the prosperity and peace of his province, which might prove detrimental or ruinous to his own career of successful

aggression,
prevailing by arms.

administration under an emperor who was his personal friend. In this vexing problem to his statesmanship it may have been a galling humiliation to him as a Roman grandee to be under the necessity of acting on the motion of mean, villainous informers, and of trafficking for evidence with apostates who might save themselves by betraying those who had trusted them as brethren. And we can hardly imagine that it was not painful to an amiable gentleman and scholar to put helpless women to the torture for the purpose of wringing criminalities from their agony. The Christians, besides, were to his apprehension in no way interesting and noble as they appear to us (Chateaubriand); but rather, loathsome while formidable; as a population of wild fanatical *fakeers* might appear to a highly cultured officer in India, who has been accustomed to mingle only with the amenities and the culture of Christian civilisation,—if at the same time he be thoroughly a worldling in his heart, with no more conception of real religion, or of the nature of a soul, than if he had been a dog.

The really appalling thing in the action of Pliny and Trajan is, that it is the action *to be expected* from faithful administrations of a constitution which fairly represented the spirit of *the mind of that world* to which the gospel had come. There perhaps were not two better men than they were in the heathen world of their time. They manifestly did not allow any natural feelings of irritation, against those who were occasioning to them such bewildering administrative difficulty and anxiety, to influence them in the direction of severity. And the law, which made non-conformity to the state religion to be high treason against the state, was only an expression of the prevalent mind of heathenism in the world;—as it had been in democratic Athens, and under the Roman republic, not less than it now was in the times of the empire, when the emperor was a god. Previously, the republic was god—perhaps not in name. What we see in these two men is simply the worldliness of the world in the specific form of the state making *itself* to be in the place of God,—the one supreme *authority*.

} Agood point

The emperor is chief pontiff of the state religion; and the whole hierarchy of ministry of religion is a function of the

state organisation under him, What we see is not like "the alliance of Church and State," in which there is always at least an ideal distinctness of the political from the ecclesiastical. It is an *identification* of religion and its offices with the state and its organisation; such that repudiation of the state religion is equivalent to dissolution of society, as if the life's blood were withdrawn from the body. The peril thus represented, of dissolution of the state through subversion of the state religion, was in that age of persecutions distinctly present to the mind of imperial statesmanship, as a motive to suppression of Christianity by force. But apart from that peril, there was the direct and open *defiance* to civil government, involved in the open profession of this religion *forbidden by the law*:—"contumacy" (cp. Matt. xviii. 17) cannot be tolerated by any society without not only disgrace but peril to its own existence. Hence combat *a l'outrance*.

We are struck at first sight with the cruel coldness of these two men, two *such* men. The frightful sufferings, mental as well as bodily, to which a multitude of simple innocent people are being subjected, does not appear to move them in their calm calculation of method and means. Even the suggestions regarding avoidance of ferocity, in the manner of proceeding to cruelty the direst, have a resemblance to ("the cruel coxcomb") Walton's prescription of tenderness to the worm which the angler is impaling. The instruction here may be in the spirit of a fine lady's warning with reference to a projected massacre of sheep and poultry for a feast,—Do not hurt the poor things more than you must; and for any sake keep the wretched business away from *me*—the very smell of blood would kill me! But the callousness which here appals us is no specialty of depravity in Pliny and Trajan. It is the hardness of worldliness in the heathen heart of stone. And that is what appears to us most formidable in the action so severely censured by Lardner. What he condemns in Pliny is only a sample of the world as it then was.

It is a dreadful thing to violate men's conscience toward God. But in the action of those two Roman magistrates there is not a shadow of any such feeling.

Trajan has no feeling of the shame of being worshipped.

We read that
 what is said might be given
 for the conduct of state in
 Apostolic times.

affected to obey the heathen magistrate in the matter of religion. The mere appearance of obeying, or pretence of conformity, was by them regarded as a crime against God, regarding which the only question was, whether the offence could ever be condoned, so far that a professedly penitent offender might be received back to the fellowship of Christians. Here, then, in the Christian principle of *authority*, as claimed by the religion in the "name" of Christ, the sword was drawn, and the scabbard thrown away;—there was a leading occasion for antipathy, resulting in deadly antagonism, on the part of the *authorities* which control the outward movements of the world; antipathy arising from the fact of *worldliness* in those authorities. In other words, under this detached aspect of its assertion of the authority of God, the religion was murderously hated as unworldly. Whence that authority (ep. Matt. xxi. 23 and vii. 29), as if calling the dead from their graves, so that in these simple Bithynians we see an invincible army, who, even by dying, overcome the world which kills them? (Pascal).

SEC. 3. *Conflict with worldly religions (the Smyranean persecution).*

At the time of this persecution (A.D. 155) Polycarp, whose martyrdom has made it peculiarly memorable, had served Christ "eighty and six years" (his own words). Irenæus loved to remember how in his early lifetime Polycarp would, among other fatherly kindnesses, give them his personal reminiscences of the Apostle John. He must have been John's contemporary for thirty years, and perhaps may have been that "angel of the Church which is in Smyrna" (Rev. ii. 10) to whom it was said by Christ in a letter from heaven, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown (not, as in our version, 'a crown') of life." We now will not dwell upon the detailed history of that persecution, or of Polycarp's martyrdom, beyond one striking fact, namely, that *in the violence* on this occasion, it was observed, *a leading part was taken by Jews.* *A leading part taken by Jews in the world's antagonism to the gospel,* is set forth (Rev. ii. 9) apocalyptically in the description of the tribulation of the

Smyrnæan Church, and also (Rev. iii. 9) in the description of the experience of the Philadelphian Church. The sufferings of Christians from malice of the Jews would thus appear to have, so to speak, arrested the eye of Christ in heaven, and moved His heart there as a thing above the plane of ordinary experience, as if peculiarly painful or terrible in the persecution of His Church on earth. In this section we will consider the opposition that was made to the gospel on behalf of *the people's religions* of the world, *especially* on the part of unbelieving *Judaism*. And we shall see that the antipathy to this new religion, even on the part of the religionism of the peoples, was *rooted in worldliness*; so that again the antagonism marked (cp. Gal. vi. 17) the new religion as unworldly.

We now turn our attention to another main aspect of this religion toward mankind, namely, its claiming to be the religion of *the living God*, the *real* God. This, in effect, is the meaning of the title, *The Monarchy* (government of one God), given to theological tracts of the primitive age. And as we look upon this aspect of it, we are reminded of the fact, that the religion which went forth from Palestine over the world in the first century, was in existence among men long before the time of Christ and the apostles. The Christians of the second century *lived* upon the Scriptures of the Old Testament, finding in those Scriptures the original revelation of what now is fulfilled in Christ, and administered through the apostles and evangelists. In this they conformed to the instruction of Christ's example, who in all things professed only to accomplish what had been intimated beforehand in those Scriptures, as having come, not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them. They conformed to the practice of the apostles, who professed to find in the Old Testament what they now declare as having come true in Jesus Christ. Their religion was thus of the Old Testament. And *in that old immemorial religion* we see, from its first appearance among mankind, as characteristic a claim to be *the religion of the living God*, the real God, the only God living and true.

This we see in it, for instance, when Moses goes down to Egypt, with a prophetic gift of inspiration, to declare the mind and will of God, and with miraculous attestation of

the divinity of his mission and calling. There was published wide, in hearing of mankind, the name of *Jehovah* (or Jahveh). About the etymological meaning of this name there has been difference of opinion. Some have thought that it expresses the idea of ("futurition") a certain continuous *coming* of God, etc.,—a movement of self-revelation and self-communication, such as took place in Israel's redemption from Egypt. And, in point of fact, historically, Israel's God has always been a *coming* one:—not only at the outset, when He went into Egypt for the purpose of bringing His Son into Canaan; but all through the after-experience of His people in the promised land. In that land, with their nationality achieved and their institutions completed, so that their God was a dweller among them as in His house, still He was regarded by them ever as a *coming* one; so that (Heb. iv. 7, xi. 1, etc.) the grand object of their faith in Him was ever a *future* self-revelation and self-communication of Him. Hence the question (Matt. xi. 3) of the disciples of John, whose prophecy (ver. 13) was the last word of the old dispensation,—“Art thou the coming one (ὁ ἐρχόμενος), or do we look for another?” That question, in the spirit of the Old Testament, may be construed as virtually meaning, —“Art thou *Jehovah*, in that definitive (“fulfilment”) completion of self-revelation and self-communication of which the promise is folded in His name?”

Another view of the etymology of the name “Jehovah” is, that it means *the living one*, the being who really is, *the Person* who has being (ὁ ὢν, in Septuag. of Ex. iii. 14),—“the great I AM.” It is well to remember that Christ “makes all things new.” He renews the language of men, putting a specialty of His own into the meaning of their common words; so that, while it is the common word that introduces us to the Christian thought, it is the Christian thought that makes for us the definitive meaning of the word—“christening” the Pagan. And historically the meaning of the Bible word “Jehovah” is made out for us by the Bible use of the word. Now in the Bible use, the word stands, not only for a God who is the coming one, but for a coming one who is the living God, the real God, the only God living and true.

To the barbarians of Lystra (Acts xiv.) Paul declared, as a conclusion from the coming in Christ, that (ver. 15) they, poor blind idolators, "should turn from these vanities unto *the living God*," the only Creator, the Ruler of all. And to the civilised Athenians (Acts xvii.) he spoke to the same effect, that the real God, *the living one*, in whom *we* live, and move, and have our being, the one whom they, in the shameful excess of their superstitions, ignorantly worshipped, is the one whom Paul now preaches in Jesus and the resurrection. And in so speaking, the apostles only repeated what had been maintained all through the old dispensation.

In all that long course of polemical theology, what the prophets maintained with their words was, that the gods of *the heathen are not God*; that the one *who is (ani hu)* the only real God, is the Living One of Israel. This, too, is what the warriors maintained with sword and spear, as David maintained it with his shepherd's sling against the brutish giant of Gath, holding it foul dishonour that there should remain unanswered a defiance to the army of "the living God." And this is what had from the outset been declared in Egypt, before Pharaoh and his heathen powers, of earth and the unseen world.

The avowed purpose, the manifest intended effect, of all the wonders of judgment on Egypt and of redemption for Israel, was to show, to make manifest in the heart of every rational creature in that land, that, through all its borders, the only real God was Jehovah, Israel's covenant God and Redeemer. And this was the terror which was to go before the chosen people, both among the border tribes that might intercept them on their way to Canaan, and among the idolatrous populations of the holy land of promise. That which went before them, making ready their conquering way, was a presentiment of doom, a premonitory instinct of fearful warning in the heathen heart, that the God of Israel is coming to show Himself as the only real God, that "Jehovah God reigneth omnipotent."

In Egypt, long after, there might be seen a veiled statue of Isis, with a legible inscription: "*The thing* that was, and is, and shall be" (τὸ ὄν, etc.). *The thing*, a dead, irrational, impersonal nature, is what the religion of Egypt had always

really concealed behind its veil of mummeries. That was the mystery in the heart of its mystifications. Israel's religion, with no mystification, had a mystery (1 Tim. iii. 16). There was a veil upon the shining face of Moses; but the glory was ever there, behind the veil. And the glory which was behind the veil, and now (2 Cor. iii. 16-18) shines clear unveiled in Christ, is that of the real God, the living God, "The *I am* (ὁ ὢν) that was, and is, and is to come" (Rev. i. 8).

The same aspect was, in the second century, presented by Christianity to the world. And before that aspect the religions of the world withered into nothing but a broken fugitive "paganism;" a secret superstition of the ignorant, until the last lingering remains of it died away in infamy of prohibited "black arts." And so it has ever been. Where this religion has shown its face, all other religions have died, or are dying, away from the earth. Among the primitive Christians it was a general opinion that the gods of the heathen, though they were not really gods, yet were real personalities; personal powers of darkness, unclean, deceitful demons, misleading mankind in a way of death through varied fascinations of delusion. Into the ground of that opinion we, at present, need not inquire. The historical fact which now affects us is, that the heathen religions had a real power. They had some hold upon the affections and the conscience of men. And they were backed by all the power of magistracy then in the imperial world. But they withered away before the "name" of Christ. As in the days of His flesh, the soldiers, when He looked upon them, went backward, and fell to the ground; so it was when His gospel went abroad into the world, simply declaring itself as *a message from Him* to mankind. Everything in the world gave way to the simple presentation of the religion under that aspect, of claiming in His name to be the religion of the living God, the real God, the only God living and true.

That aspect was unworldly. The claim was a new thing under the sun. *The profession, to be the religion of the only God living and true, was wholly original.* Whence the universal dislike to the Jews, on account of *their* having

made the profession; a dislike now falling in fury upon the Christians, when the profession falls to be made by them. *There was no other religion claiming to be the religion of the living God*, the real God. "The gods" of the heathen, to the apprehension of the heathen themselves, were not the living God, the eternal Creator, but only secondary deities, more or less of kindred to our earth and time. The original deity, the *Kronos* of the Greeks, the *Saturnus* of the Romans, was, in their view, like "the eternal one" of the Fijian cannibals, or the Llama of the Tartars, comparatively an idle spectator of the world's business, taking little or no effective part in it, and capable of being easily explained away into the system of nature, or into a figure of speech. And so through the ages; there has arisen no rival to Christianity in respect of the original claim to be a religion of the real God, the living God. For Mohammedanism and Mormonism are, like some systems professing to be Christian, only coarse, clumsy plagiarisms of Christianity. As for Deism, it never has been a religion, though some have held it as a sort of theory of the universe. And for the Deist, who holds that the universe cannot be accounted for without a God, it is an important question, whence this religion, which alone is even in profession a "service" of the real God, the living God?

Let us say, not Deism, but Theism. To those who really believe that there is a personal Creator and Ruler of the world, it surely is, relatively to the question of the truth of Christianity, an important consideration, as stated by Paul to the Lystrans and the Athenians, that He has continued in various ways to give tokens of His goodness toward mankind; and in especial that, through indications of His own beneficent being, He has been leading them *toward* the good supreme in Him,—inducing them to seek after Him, yet leaving them short of apprehending Him (Acts xvii. 23). Even the false religions are monumental of a seeking, for which the finding can be only in the true. A beneficent purpose may thus be served by the demonstration of man's impotency to find lost life in God. But for accomplishment of that purpose, may it not be expected or credited of the divine compassionate faithfulness, that God should give supernaturally what man has found by groping (*ψηλαφάω*, in Acts xvii. 27, is *palpare*) in

the dark. And the light supernatural, thus to be looked for, where is it, if not here, in the only professed religion of the living God, the real God? Elsewhere in the universe is there any real appearance of a solid open way of life for man?

Mankind appear to think not. The Athenian altar is "to deity unknown." Gibbon's generalisation, that to the apprehension of the peoples all the religions were equally true, is unhistorical. It might more plausibly be said, that to the peoples all the religions had come to be known as false. Among some Platonising philosophers there was a lingering, faint belief in God. Among the peoples, though there was a "superstition," living belief in God had long ceased to exist. The mythic stories, which at one time represented a sort of living belief, came into existence (Grote, *History of Greece: Dissertations on the Heroic Age and Homeric Poems*) in the pre-historic period, before there was written history; and began to be disbelieved when the peoples began to reflect. From the time of Socrates downward, the unbelief of the philosophers only represented the true inward condition of the peoples. The Bible religion, the more it is studied and reflected on, the more it is believed among mankind, especially on the part of those who are most earnest in the search for truth. The pagan religions die when the peoples begin to reflect upon the meaning of them, or to inquire into the truth of them. Euhemerus did not destroy the myths. His criticism was occasioned by disbelief in them. The world to which the gospel came was *a world without historical belief in the truth of its own religions*. Mankind might thus have subscribed to the confession of that people, the Karens, who declared that they had not a religion.

Christianity presents the aspect of a provision by divine goodness for that pathetic condition. *Its story of self-revelation and self-communication of the living God, is placed, not in infancy of mankind, where men could not reflect, but clearly within the historic period of man's life on earth.* The main story is placed, not merely after the beginning of literature among men, but in the last of the civilisators of the ancient world, after the literature of that latest civilisation has matured beyond its golden prime. And the story of the original redemption from Egypt originated in Israel when

a natural difference
 brought out by hist.
 And account for it?

Israel not only was a nation in clear distinctness of consciousness, but had spent centuries in a land of literary culture. So, at this hour, a man's beginning to inquire in earnest into those stories is found to be ordinarily the precursor of his beginning a new life of serious belief in their truth and divinity.

Historically, what we see in the second century is, *an unbelieving world giving itself over to the faith of Christ in consequence of seriously reflecting on the Bible stories about self-revelation of the living God.* And all through the centuries Christianity has had, at the foundation of its life, that *historical belief* in the reality of self-revelations of God within a well-known period of human thought and life. No other thing has even appeared to be thus a provision of healing to the world, broken-hearted by finding itself under a necessity of disbelieving in religion as soon as it begins to reflect. At the present day the heathen religions are dying away where the gospel is heard, were it only because the gospel-preaching leads to serious thought about the foundations. *There is, perhaps, not an intelligent heathen in the world, who, if he should begin to think seriously about the meaning of his religion, and the grounds of it, would not begin to disbelieve it in his heart.* Where, then, is the healing, from the benevolence of God, if not in the historical truth of Christianity?

The sort of half belief, which was operative in the "superstitious," was not peculiar to the peoples, as distinguished from the philosophers and magistrates. No doubt the Ephesian populace had a sort of half-belief in Diana. But the Roman augurs, too, perhaps had a sort of half-belief, when, Cicero said, two of them could not look one another in the face without smiling. The Emperor Marcus, "the philosopher," though as a Stoic he could not consistently believe in any personal deity, yet was very superstitious, going so far in sacrificial service to "the gods" as to be a laughing-stock to his own subjects and soldiers. And Aurelian, in resolving upon extirpation of Christianity, was avowedly influenced by fear of the displeasure of "the gods," which, to his apprehension, was manifested in the perils and miseries of his empire, on account of its permission of this new religion, which made the gods to be no longer served. In his career of ambition,

while he was struggling up to sovereignty over the world, there probably was no theological study. But there survived in him those feelings of superstition which he had drawn in with his mother's milk. And these, when he came to be burdened with the care of the world's empire, took the shape of an opinion, which determined him to persecuting action, with a resolution that was not enfeebled, but was embittered, by the conscious hollowness of a half-belief, in the heart of one who probably knew that he did not "*know* the truth."

Superstition, which only half believes in itself, is naturally cruel, were it only through an instinct of endeavouring by violence to conceal its own hollowness from itself. The essential absurdity of worshipping what is not really God, remains as a sting of impulse to that violence, through all the refinements and pomps by which heathenism may attempt to escape from the manifest unreason of idolatry; though it should refine itself away into a merely pantheistic naturalism. And the consciousness of that absurdity, making the religious belief to be felt as unreal or *false*, gives to the power of the superstitious feeling an aspect of demoniacal possession, as in the case of one who is a slave of evil passions, against the admonitions of his own true reason.

On the other hand, the human craving for supernaturalism, arising out of man's need of God, will, in the absence of a real belief, go to the extreme of that natural magic, which is a sort of supernaturalism without God. The "superstitions," which are seen retreating, in cruelty of rage and terror, at the approach of the new religion, we saw to be like those night things, beasts of prey, which, in the dawning, reluctantly withdraw, growling, into the congenial gloom of forests and of caves, from the unwelcome light. The aspect of distraction, like that of the demoniac among the tombs, which, when the gospel era arises, heathenism, with its religions, ever presents in that twilight of its retreating, is notably contrasted with the composed self-possession (Luke xxi. 19) of this religion of the living God. And the distraction on the face of the world's religions arises from that incoherence at the heart of them which is constituted by the worldliness of placing on the throne what is not really "the King, eternal, immortal, invisible." (There is an incoherence as real, with a distraction

often as distinctly visible, in placing *none* upon the throne, where it is impossible not to perceive a governmental domain of law.)

When we speak of "the world" as remaining antagonistic to Christianity, we ought to remember that it was "the world" only so far as worldly in this respect, of its being *a residual heathenism which*, with or without a religion of gods that are unreal, *rejects the religion of the real God*, the living God. On behalf of Christianity, it can be plausibly represented, it is a suggestion ostensibly coexistent with historical fact and the nature of the things, that, in the world to which the gospel comes, whatever it finds in man (John vii. 17) of rational preparedness for service of the living God gives itself over to the faith of Christ, thus giving the attestation of an "honest and good heart" to the gospel "word of the kingdom." On the other hand, *the rejection of the gospel*, perhaps with violence of overt antipathy, *by what in itself is a heathenish residuum of worldliness*, fairly admits of being represented as a "mark" (Gal. vi. 17) of the divinity of Christ.

NOTE.—*The Jews in this relation.*

The distinctive action of the Jews in relation to Christianity has to be considered by us only in connection with the claim of this religion to be the religion of the living God. The place and part of that peculiar people in the history of the world is regarded by Pascal (*Thoughts*) as constituting a good position for demonstration of the truth of religion, a "thought" which is applied, in the demonstration of the truth of Christianity, by "An American Citizen" (Walker) in a work on *The Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation*. Their distinctive place and part, now falling to be considered by us, is summed up in this, that *they, professing a religion of the only true and living God, joined the heathen*, and took the lead of heathenism, in a deadly antagonism to Christianity in its campaign for mastery of the world.

According to Christians themselves, "salvation is of the Jews." Palestine is the cradle of the true religion. In a real sense Jerusalem on earth is the mother of us all. Their Scriptures are the fundamental revelation, to which the New

Testament is related as an "interpretation clause," appended to a legislative Act of Parliament, is related to the fundamental Act of legislation. But historically that people rejected Christianity with a violence evincing mortal hatred. It was really they that crucified Christ. The "persecutions" began with their expelling from their synagogues the Christian believers in Jehovah. They drove away the apostles and evangelists too. All over the lands of the Dispersion, in the apostolic age, we find the Jews, alike of Europe and of Asia, not only themselves rejecting the gospel, but arranging the "assault" (Acts xiv. 5) of heathenism and themselves taking the lead in a violence which (Acts xxvi. 10) did not willingly stop short of death. After the apostolic age we find them, alone, in really *theological* conflict with Christianity, on the ground of acknowledged revelation of the true God. His *Debate*, on this ground, *with Jew Trypho*, about the middle of the second century, is by far the largest of the extant works of Justin Martyr. Tertullian, at the close of the century, has a work *Against the Jews*. Far down in the fifth century, Augustine, in a work (*De Catechisandis Rudibus*) on systematic Christian instruction of youth, prescribes that the young Christian shall be well grounded in the controversies of Christianity with Manichæans *and with Jews*. When heathenism, on the field of debate among men, survived only as a dualistic theory of the universe, Judaism still retained vitality as a *religion*—opposing Christianity professedly on the ground of the scriptural revelation of the only true and living God. And so it is to this hour. Though there is little of actual warfare, the relation is a state of war, the position is one of hostility, though it should be suspended. From the very nature of the case, the unbelieving Judaism that is in the world is a religion which, professedly of the one true living God, is at the head and front of the heathenism of the world in its antagonism to Christianity.

At the martyrdom of Polycarp at Symrna, the Jews, far from Palestine, were observed taking the lead of that violence which culminated in his death. A little before that time Justin Martyr, in his debate with Trypho, stated as well known that the Jews throughout the world systematically formed centres of antagonism to Christianity where they had

influence, sending emissaries to this and that place for the purpose of solemnly, in their synagogues, denouncing the Nazarenes. This is in keeping with what we find in the Apocalypse (chaps. ii., iii.) regarding the experience of Christianity on earth, as seen from the view-point of heaven's mediatorial throne. And it raises an initial question regarding the *relation of that unbelieving Judaism to Christianity* (see below, Bk. II.), in connection with their common profession of adherence to the original revelation of the true God.

At our present stage of inquiry the question is worth considering, on account of a side-light which it throws upon the mythic theory of the Bible story of revelation; and upon every theory or opinion that contradicts the fact of the historical reality of that revelation (see in Bk. II. on "Moses in the Law"). The Old Testament story of supernatural self-revelation of God, in words and works, has to be explained away in deference to the atheistic presupposition that miracle is impossible, that there is no supernatural. Accordingly, the specialty of the ostensibly historical Old Testament revelation, its pure and lofty monotheism, rising from amid the "pollutions" (2 Pet. ii. 20) of heathenish polytheistic idolatry, is ascribed to a specialty of natural character in the Jews, namely, a pure and lofty religiousness, in respect of which they are naturally the *elite* of humanity (we must not say "the elect," for that might suggest "of God"). In this respect it is assumed the Shemites are the highest of the descendants of Noah, and the seed of Abraham are the highest of the Semitic peoples; and the wonderful history of the exodus and such things, and the wonderful visions of prophecy and responses of psalmody, are the result simply, under operation of peculiar outward conditions, of that peculiar natural religiousness which is the distinguishing character of the Israelitish nation by its nature (see below, Bk. II. on "the calling of Moses").

Now we will not here inquire what is involved in the supposition that one race of men has a knowledge of the living God, or a belief in His being and government and friendship, which is absent from the heart and life of the rest of mankind. But we observe, to begin with, that the theory contradicts itself, and bears a strong testimony in favour of that supernaturalism which it is its purpose to exclude; so

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that the supernatural, which it drives out of the door, flies in through the window. For it has to make *the Jews to be of all mankind the purest and loftiest by nature in their views of religion*; while yet it ascribes to the Jews *that view of religion in the Old Testament representation of history which, alone of all the views that have arisen among mankind, is thoroughly and all-persuasively supernaturalistic*. It thus makes them powerful witnesses for supernaturalism. When we look more closely into the ground of the supposition, we find that the theory proceeds upon the opposite of historical fact — of the fact, for instance, that, when the Hebrews came to be under domination of that view of pure and lofty monotheism, the Semitic kindreds from which they sprang were not distinguished from the rest of mankind by a pure and lofty religiousness of nature, but round about Israel were sunk, like other races of men, in the “pollutions” of idolatrous polytheism.

Further, apparently the Hebrew race themselves, so far from having naturally been so fully possessed by a pure and lofty religiousness that it would be natural for them to invent or to dream themselves into a pure and lofty monotheism, were *from the beginning openly antagonistic to that monotheism* which had somehow come to be proposed to them. So it appears from their own Scriptures (see below, Bk. II. chap. ii.), which they own as the authoritative record of the revelation of the only true God. That Scripture, while giving a history of the revelation as made to them, at the same time gives a view of their manner of receiving and dealing with the revelation. And the view which it gives is that they, in so far as they were left to their own natural bent or proclivity, always showed themselves averse to the monotheism, antagonistic to its proposed applications in their practice, as if there had been rooted in their heart a mortal antipathy to its purity and loftiness of principles. They slew the prophets who were the exponents of the revelation. And as for Moses, through whom it was originally given, what they showed by their dealing with the great mediator of their covenant was “an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God” (Heb. iii. 12). True-hearted belief in the living God was not

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a specialty of the Jews by nature ; it was an exceptional thing among them, characteristic of a "remnant" of them, the peculiarity of an "election of grace."

It was thus (Rom. ii.-iii.) that "the law" itself had spoken of those who were under the law. The antagonism of unbelieving Judaism to Christianity is, on the face of it, a presumptive evidence in favour of this religion thus far, that the antagonism is *in the line*, ostensibly in continuation, of *that antagonism* to the religion of the living God, which had been characteristic of the same people under the Old Dispensation. And, apart from external evidences, through which Christians (Acts xvii. 3) profess to show, on the ground of the old revelation, that the Messiah must needs have come, and that he can be only Jesus of Nazareth, there are *in the unbelieving Judaism some internal characters* which may be fairly represented as evincing such a worldliness, that the religion which it repels has in its favour such attestation as (Gal. vi. 17) worldliness gives to a religion by rejecting it.

1. *Judaism is sectarian, while Christianity is Catholic-human.* Baur and his school would have it that the genuine original Christianity was sectarian, excluding all who are not of the circumcision, either by birth or by adoption. The Christians themselves were completely ignorant of this until the discovery of it in our day. And the keen-eyed Jews of the first age were not aware of it, but imagined that the Christian Church was open to Gentiles as to Jews, and that the distinction between Jew and Gentile had in the religion of Christians no longer a recognised place. But Christians maintained that the Catholic comprehensiveness for a special purpose, prevented from coming into application by the Mosaic system, was really founded, not only in the natural relationship of the true living God to all men, but in the supernaturally revealed purpose of God, set forth in the Old Testament Abrahamic covenant of grace. Christians maintain that now. They hold that the Christian comprehensiveness, including all mankind in that covenant, is godliness of Old Testament prescription for the new time. And the Jewish exclusiveness admits of being represented as a narrow worldliness, the dead letter of the Old Testament in opposition to its living spirit, the veil of Moses without the veiled glory. The

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Jews have been of great value in the world as good citizens, capable administrators, and philosophers. But Moses was not an Adam Smith, nor the Pentateuch a *Novum Organum*. And a seed of Abraham which does not freely admit all the families of the earth to spiritual blessing, is only a seed of Abraham according to the flesh—a merely carnal Israel, with a religion that is worldly.

2. *Judaism makes bondage, while Christianity sets free.* Here, too, the perspicacity of Tübingen has discovered in the original Christianity what was completely unknown to the original Christians and to their Jewish antagonists. The "offence of the cross" was constituted in the first instance by its humiliation of Messiah. But the reason of that humiliation in the Christian system is, that the way of salvation is opened to guilty mankind through that "exodus" ("decease") which the Messiah was ordained to accomplish (cp. 1 Pet. i. 9-13). And the reason why the Jews have "stumbled at that stone" is, that their system has no place for a Christ who is our Passover, sacrificed for us, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. They thus disregard the witness of Moses in whom they trust. Going about to establish a righteousness of their own, they show themselves ignorant of the righteousness of God. They trust in themselves that they are righteous, despising others. The ideal unbelieving Jew is thus a Pharisee in the temple, thanking God that he is not as other men are, but is punctiliously observant of fasting and tithe-payment. A temple full of such men would at best be only as a museum exhibition of mummies, with no soul of the religion of the living God. A nation of such an Abrahamic seed would not be a true Israel, to which pertaineth the adoption and the glory, but a self-sufficient *Ichabod*, from which the glory is departed; for the glory is that of "Jehovah, Jehovah God, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin," as manifested between the cherubim, over the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat. "Jehovah, Jehovah God, forgive," etc.

3. *The worldliness of Judaism appears even in its relation to the doctrine of resurrection.* Bishop Warburton (to whom paradox was welcome) founded an argument for the divine inspiration of Moses upon the supposition that Israel was

under his system left in ignorance of a future life. The Sadducees, upon the same supposition, sought to show from Moses that the doctrine of Christ, as to a future life, is an incredible absurdity. And he showed that, in their hearts not recognising the omnipotence of God, they at the same time were ignorant even of those Mosaic Scriptures on which they founded,—even of the first recorded word which Moses received regarding Israel. The argument of Christ proceeds upon the principle, that he who has Jehovah as God is alive. But Abraham had Jehovah as God when Moses was called in Sinai. Therefore Abraham was alive at that time, though he had died and was buried hundreds of years before. Thus the doctrine of a future life was intimated to Israel through Moses by the way of fact.

We will not inquire by what process of reasoning from the original revelation the Israelites established themselves in the belief of that doctrine. We know that in fact when Christ came they were established in the belief of it; so that Martha (John xi. 24) “knows” the doctrine, as an Old Testament believer, irrespectively of the new light of Him who is the resurrection and the life. It was at this time an established article of Israel’s religion. The Sadducees, who disbelieved in it, were not properly a sect of Jewish religionists, but (Acts xxiii. 8) atheistic infidels, like Renan and Strauss; hiding their atheism behind the veil of Moses, as Celsus (a bashful infidel) pretended to speak as a Jew. Hence (Acts iv., v., xxiii. 1–8), from the time when the resurrection was made prominent, as the grand outstanding fact of Christianity, the Pharisees, who had taken a lead in procuring the crucifixion, withdrew or fell into the background; and the Sadducees, whose whole atheistic system was demolished by that fact, came into the front of opposition to the gospel.

But what use has unbelieving Judaism for the doctrine of resurrection? Under Moses in Canaan there was not much occasion for it; the young bird in the nest has little occasion for wings. The grand effect of Mosaism was, not to show the way into a future life, but to lead men to know the present reality of life in God the Redeemer (ὁ ὢν)—His dwelling among them (tabernacling). Of the future, to the

effect of sending life *away from* the present, thus making the present lifeless, they had heard enough, perhaps too much, in Egypt with its ghostliness. In any case the great matter, in that infancy of the Church (Heb. v. 13), was realisation of life as a *present thing*, like the tabernacle, where men had in the midst of them the service and favour of God. The ground-lesson of the tabernacle religion was (Ps. lxxviii. 18), that highest life (John i. 14; 1 John i. 1-3) is with us here and now. The point was, not as to the *duration* of "this life," but as to the *nature* of it, high as God. So, where we now think of the "immortality of the soul" in a future state, the men of old, having the same faith (Heb. xi. 1), would think of the *transcendentalism of life* "in God."

But the doctrine of resurrection is like outstretched wings of a manhood fully formed. What is an unbelieving Jew to do with these wings? Where is he to fly to? What is he to find there, or do there? A merely territorial Canaan, full of thriving Jews, is a pleasant thing to think of in itself. But it is not a rest for the dove sent from *this* ark (1 Pet. iii. 21). As an outcome of the grand progression of the eternal God through time, it seems an incoherent anti-climax; which, somehow, the mind refuses to contemplate, with even so much of interest as to *dis-believe* in it with any seriousness. An eternal world full of Jews, who are perfectly blessed in the thought of their being the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, and thankful that they are not as other men are,—a resurrection for such a paltry scandal to the universe is certainly not the "restitution of all things" which the prophets had in their "sentence after the last." The *real* Israel are not those whose hearts are set on such a final "rest" (cp. Heb. xii. 22-24 and Rev. vii.).

There never was a more thorough-going Hebrew of the old school than Matthew; who, while describing "the kingdom" as "of heaven," yet will see to it that in all things the business of this kingdom takes place in strict accordance with the Scriptures. But he, at the beginning of his history, sees the wise men coming from the east to worship the infant Saviour Immanuel. And at the end of it he hears the gospel sent to all nations; that they may serve Him who now, after sufferings unto death, is exalted in the glory that should

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follow. John, too, in the Apocalypse is a genuine Jew, such that Messrs. Renan and others will allow his book to be his own, in the hope that it may help *them* to an originally sectarian Christianity. But there is no sectarianism "in the resurrection" according to that Apocalypse (chap. vii.) The native Jews are there, 144,000, a perfect number, exactly complete. But there on the same footing are the Gentiles, a numberless number; as Abraham saw his true seed multitudinous as the sand of the sea-shore, or as the stars of the firmament.

In that, no doubt, there is an election, sovereign will of God, who calleth the stars by name, for that He is great in power. And perhaps it is better that it should be so—that the number of the saved should be dependent on the loving heart of God, rather than—the only alternative—that it should be dependent on the ungodly heart of man. In any case, the result, which is great enough to satisfy the Redeemer, seeing in it of the travail of His soul, has in it no judicial sectarianism, but a world-wide comprehensive human catholicity; such as to occasion song for the angels of the rational universe, and for the powers of creation most near of kin to us of earth, and for the four and twenty elders representing our own mankind. With a Catholic redemption in his view, Matthew may have a good reason for not carrying his genealogy back beyond Abraham. For even upon that view an important theological point is made by the fact, that the manhood which the Son of God assumed was in the line of the *covenant* seed of promise. But not the less, Luke has a good reason for carrying it back to Adam. For the Covenanters are not to be only the seed of Abraham according to the flesh.

The narrowness of the unbelieving Judaism is on the face of it a worldly thing, unlike the Old Testament religion of the true and living God. And the antagonism of that worldly thing to Christianity is so far a presumptive evidence of the truth of the gospel of Christ Jesus.

SEC. 4. *Conflict with worldly philosophy (Lyonnese persecution).*

"They filled with glory their respective stations, either in active or in contemplative life; their excellent understandings were improved by study; philosophy had purified their minds from the prejudices of the vulgar superstitions; and their days were spent in the pursuit of truth and the practice of virtue" (Gibbon).

This is a picture of the philosophers, with Marcus Aurelius at their head, who, as we saw, was abjectly superstitious without believing. We have seen another of those who are named by Gibbon, "in the pursuit of truth" as to the Christians in the Neronian persecution, and another of them, Pliny, in "the practice of virtue" as director of the Bithynian persecution. Marcus Aurelius we shall now see at full length as the arch-persecutor of Lyons and Vienne (A.D. 177). That persecution, says an editor of Gibbon, M. Guizot (*History of France*, English translation, vol. i. p. 202), "was undoubtedly by his (Marcus') orders." Guizot, who carefully studied that period, has the following (same vol. p. 117):—

"Nearly always,"—in the great persecutions from A.D. 202–312,—"wherever it was in force, the pagan mob, in its brutality of fanatical superstition, added to imperial rigour its own atrocities and cynical excesses." The Lyonnese persecution he describes as having been aggravated by popular outrages on the Christians, driving them into seclusion or concealment. He specifies the brutal violence to the Bishop Pothinus, ninety years of age, who at this time suffered martyrdom. As to Marcus Aurelius, he says: "This conscientious magistrate let loose at Lyons, against the most innocent of subjects, the zealous servility of his agents and the atrocious passions of the mob."

The Christian "endurance" was by Tacitus described as "obstinacy." Pliny gave it the additional description of "contumacy." And we shall find Marcus not as a persecuting emperor, but as a soliloquising "philosopher," giving it the same description as Tacitus. We will describe it as *moral earnestness*, having it in our view relatively to that character to compare the Christian martyrs with those philosophers of whom Gibbon's appreciation is so high upon the

principle of *detur digniori*—"the crown to him it fits." The "obstinaey" which gave such offence to the philosophers is the scriptural "endurance," arising out of the authority of Christ commanding in a service of the living God.

The Christians of Lyons and Vienne would probably not have been heard of among mankind were it not for this persecution which "dragged them into fame" and "drove them up to heaven." Irenæus, who probably was the writer of the letter to the Christians of Asia and Phrygia, in which their "fiery trial" is made known to us, is probably the only one of their community who would have otherwise been known to fame, if that great trial had not been disclosed to us, as if one, by the light of a lightning flash, had through the darkness caught a glimpse of some terrific agony of battle or storming. That part of the Rhone valley had become so much Latinised as to have obtained the name of *Provincia* (which, in fact, it still retains, "Provence"). The district was originally colonised by the Phœceans, and had for immemorial ages been much frequented by Asiatic Greeks, so that Marseilles was reckoned almost a Greek city. Irenæus himself, who at the time in question was a deacon of Vienne, was an Oriental Greek, whom we have heard of as a pupil of Polycarp of Smyrna. In the narrative we perceive that there were Greek-speaking Orientals and Latin-speaking Romans among the Christians. But Irenæus, we know, is losing the free use of Greek through pastoral use of the language of the Celts; and no doubt the main body of the Church membership is native Celtic.

At the first outbreak of this trial, ten gave way to the "terror," which lapse occasioned a sort of panic among the brethren. Before the end of it, the "lapsed" resumed their profession, and suffered death for the gospel with their brethren. There is something very moving in such cases. And perhaps there is more of pathetic power to win us in a story like that of Peter, with its denial and repentance, than if he had been another "adamantine" Paul (Chrysostom's word for Paul's Epistles). But the history as a whole is a marvel of that "endurance" through which Christianity overcame the persecuting world. It is interesting to remember that the native Celtic population were among the

ancestors of that great nation whose "endurance" (patience) is said to be not in proportion to its other martial virtues. Only one of the sufferers becomes known to us as of the Roman rank of gentlemen or free citizen. The most illustrious of them all, Blandina, was a slave girl. She did nothing but suffer, saying, simply, "I am a Christian; we are not evil-doers." Her "endurance" of torture extended over two days. Her invincible fortitude wore out the strength of successive relays of executioners, who fainted with the toil and the horror of inflicting what she had to undergo; and who said, that no woman had ever so borne such sufferings before. At last she was bound up in a net and thrown to a wild bull, to be tossed and gored to death. Her fellow-Christians observed that God showed in her person that things which are poor and despised among men are honourable before God. But if Blandina thus be glorious, surely Marcus Aurelius is infamous.

He was surnamed Antoninus, after Antoninus Pius, his adoptive father, and his senior colleague on the imperial throne. As a magistrate he was reputed wise, brave, just, and benevolent, one of the really great emperors of that age of great emperors. He was entitled the "philosopher," through his having from his youth been of the school of the Stoics. He wrote a book (*Monologion*—"Soliloquy") of *Meditations*, which has been much admired. But probably the admiration has been somewhat overdone.

Literary men, who perhaps hope they are "philosophers," naturally admire an emperor who is one of themselves. His purple seems to reflect on them a certain lustre as of purple, not of plush. Hence it is recorded of him that when he went to lecture, as if he had been a man, some one expressed the natural wonder; to which he answered something which has not dwelt in our memory, but which no doubt was a fair sample of imperial pedagogics. His "Meditations" do not help to understanding of the stoical philosophy. As intellectual exercises, they are poor performances, like the essays of a dull schoolboy, in expansion of "themes" which have been dictated by masters whom he does not fully understand. A far finer sample of the philosophising Stoic is Epictetus, who in personal character has features

of resemblance to Socrates. Marcus Aurelius was one of those many Romans who took to Stoicism on account of what they deemed its value as an ascetic discipline, without comprehending its speculative principles (Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen*). Instead of learning the philosophy from him, we have to learn him from the philosophy. But the *Meditations* are admired on account of the fine tone of their moralising. Some appear to be biassed in his favour by their finding in him a saintly hero who is not a Christian, and a very pious man who does not believe in a personal God. (He ought not as a Stoic to believe; whether, in fact, he believed or not, no man can tell.) The Christians would not take so favourable a view of one in whom they found the most ruthless of all persecutors, and the one who of all the persecutors produces most of the impression of being a thoroughly heartless man.

In that persecution the sufferers vividly realised two unseen personalities, contending for possession of the Christians through all the stormy trial. One of these was the strong compassionate Son of God. The divine love flowing from His heart, to sustain and cheer them, was felt by them so in its reality that there is produced on our mind the impression of their seeing Him bodily present, as Nebuchadnezzar saw Him with the three children in the furnace seven times heated. The other personality, antagonistic in that awful wrestling, was the Beast of the Apocalypse. This description of Satan, the brutish enemy of God and man, seems to have laid hold of the imagination of Celtic peoples; in one of their tongues *am báird* is almost a proper name for that "enemy." The brutish cruelty, which the description especially points, came out with peculiar vividness in the experience of those Lyonnese martyrs. It appeared to them as if rioting in the fury of its outrage upon the rational nature of the soul. And to them the incarnation of the beast-fiend of the Apocalypse was Marcus Aurelius, "the philosopher." Their fiery trial was historically one of the great decisive battles—a Marathon—for the freedom of the soul. It may be said to have effectively been decisive as Marathon itself. It seems to have been felt from that time onward that Christianity was invincible; and the pagan Roman empire began,

under Commodus, the colleague of Marcus, to decline toward its fall. In that great agony for what is highest in man, the most illustrious of the combatants was Blandina. The blessings to mankind, of her having helped so to turn the tide in that sore battle for the soul's right to be free, that is, to be as a soul, cannot be estimated. They are as wide in their influence as Christian civilisation, and their duration is eternal as that of the soul. On the other hand, Marcus, "the philosopher," trampling on the nature of the soul, is an image of the Apocalyptic Beast.

That massacre of innocents was on the face of it a great crime. It was peculiarly great because perpetrated by magistracy, the natural guardian of innocence in the community. And beyond all question the chief criminal was the emperor. We shall see various indications of what Guizot states as a fact, that the massacre was "undoubtedly by his orders." The "law of ceremonies," under which the crime was perpetrated, did not *need* to be carried into force. Ordinarily, it was not. It was carried into effect only occasionally, and that by a distinct act of administrative *will*. So in this case, we see a *rescript* of Marcus, in which he does *not* give what was petitioned for—namely, permission to allow a free citizen to die the death of a freeman, without the infamy of a slave. The emperor, autocratic head of the state, might have allowed the law to fall into disuse, in view of the fact that it was originally passed for a condition of things wholly different from the present. Or he could, perhaps with consultation of the Senate, have endeavoured to get it rescinded as a barbarously bad law in the new circumstances: in fact it was rescinded afterwards under Constantine the Great. At least he, a "philosopher," could have resigned his throne, or died, rather than sanction that atrocious violence to the nature of the soul. Instead of any such thing, he freely went further in the atrocity than any other man had ever gone before.

The "law of ceremonies" did not require that Marcus, like the monster Nero, should not only put the offender to death, but add the cruelty of torture. And in this persecution there were two heretofore unheard of violations of old established principles of the Roman Constitution, for guarding

the safety of society and the sanctity of Rome in the person of free citizens. 1. For the first time in Roman history slaves were received, under influences of terror, as informers, and accusing witnesses against their owners. 2. For the first time in that history a free citizen was put to the *infamous* death of a slave. The dictionary meaning of a word here (*ἀποτυμ-πανίζεσθαι*) has exercised the slaves of the dictionary. The narrative leaves no doubt of the fact of torture. The local administrators, not feeling warranted in violating the majesty of Rome by torturing a citizen, consulted the emperor. His rescript, concisely imperious, was, that the Christians are to suffer unless they recant. And the description of actual suffering leaves no doubt of the construction that the local administrators put upon this. The *infamous* murder of this Athalus, an estimable gentleman and scholar, on account of his not denying one whom he believed to be his Redeemer and his God, was distinctly the personal crime of this "philosopher," who, to employ the words of Gibbon's description of Nero, was at once "a priest, an atheist, and a god."

Further, under this "philosopher" there was brought into play an ingenuity of torture that was distinctly new,—ingenuity like the playfulness of a tiger with its disabled victim; only the tiger is not *cruel* in its play. One of the confessors was Sanctus, who perhaps was a veteran soldier of the empire. When interrogated as to his name, country, nation, station, he would answer only, "I am a Christian;" for, as a narrator says, Christ was ever for him the only station, nation, country, name—his "all and in all." To him was applied one of the new inventions of torturing ingenuity; namely, heated metal, which, applied to the most sensitive part of the body, was intended to produce the largest possible amount of sheer agony that a human being can endure without absolutely dying of pain. When put to this torture he only said, "*This* is the real eating of human flesh." Alexander, a physician, had been so zealously active in the cause of that suffering humanity as to have obtained the name of the Christians' advocate (*Paraclete*, the word for *Comforter* in John xiv.—xvi., and *Advocate* in 1 John ii. 1). It was remarked that he, when undergoing cruel tortures, was

visibly sustained, as if "bedewed and refreshed," by the heavenly *Paraclete* (the Holy Ghost) from the heart of Christ. That history of torture is carefully studied by Edward Gibbon, collecting materials for a history of the period. He does not faint with horror at the sight of human sufferings. Nor does he curse the responsible author of that frightful illustration of "man's inhumanity to man." But he lauds him as the *ne plus ultra* of human excellence; placing him at the head of those illustrious philosophers whose "days were spent in the pursuit of truth and the practice of virtue." In fact, he desires that this hero should be seen to be, by his perfection, a practical demonstration of the untruth of Christianity, in its doctrine of redemption presupposing fall.

That Aurelian "practice of virtue" did not stop short with murdering and torturing the most innocent of his helpless subjects. He made war upon the dead. He mangled the bodies of the slain. The Christians were not allowed to take away for decent burial the remains of brethren who had perished in the violence or died in prison. These were exposed, under an armed watch, to be consumed by beasts or birds of prey (cp. Hom. *Il.* i. 1-4). It is mentioned that the motive to this last atrocity was a desire to expose to derision that *doctrine of the resurrection* through belief of which the Christians were enabled to overcome the natural fear of death. And here, beneath the mask of the emperor, we seem to see the hand of "the philosopher," in a propagandism of the doctrine of the Stoics, employing the dogs and vultures for his apostles and evangelists. For comparing carnal things with carnal, we seem to see in the heart of the "philosopher" what would account for that peculiar phase of the persecution, as a volcanic outbreak of *odium theologicum*—"theological spite"—on the part of one who does not believe in a personal God.

The Stoical Philosophy (Zeller) proceeded upon the pantheistic view, that there is not a personal God, nor indeed a personal man; that the universe is all one impersonal substance of being, like an ocean, on which the species of things that seem to exist are only surface waves, and the individuals are as bubbles of the foam; so that death is to be viewed as simply a disappearance of that bubble, and may therefore be

accepted uncomplainingly, if not welcomed as release from the weary vain show of the delusion called life. Marcus, in his *Meditations*, tries to say fine things in this vein without understanding it. And, among other things (xi. 3, Long's translation), he says, "What a soul is that, which is ready, if at any moment it must be separated from the body, either to be extinguished, or (to be) dispersed, or (to) continue to exist!" But here, when so admiring that soul, his own soul is apparently stung with a sharp sudden pain. For he goes on to add, "But so that this readiness comes from a man's own judgment, not from mere obstinacy, *as with the Christians.*"

Here again there is a pagan bewilderment, such as we saw in Trajan "the good," saying that the apostates were to be *pardoned* when found *not guilty*; and in Tacitus the Great, explaining that the Christians were obstinate in burning *themselves* because they hated *the rest of mankind*. Marcus now makes the Christian's preparedness for death to have resulted from "*mere obstinacy.*" How can "mere obstinacy" prepare any one for death? May he not be obstinately bent upon *living*, if he can, as most men are? And to say that a man will die rather than deny his God and Saviour is not to show that he is obstinate, but to show that he seriously *believes* in God. For example, under the rule of this "philosopher," Polycarp has been put to death at Smyrna; and has explained, when they pressed him to recant, that the thing is impossible, after he has found Christ a good master for more than eighty years,—"*How could I deny Him, my Redeemer and my King?*" Plainly this "philosopher" does not know what he is saying, but cannot restrain himself when he comes to an occasion of having a snarling fling of antipathy at the Christians.

What have they done? Why should he have such a spite at *them*? They, and what he calls their "obstinacy," have given him a great deal of trouble in his vain endeavour to stamp out their religion from the world. There was an Antoninus, probably his own adoptive father, who, when the Christians came offering themselves in crowds, in answer to a general challenge, to bear witness to Christ, and to die for His name, cried out to them, "Are there not cliffs and ropes

enough ? ” for them to make away with themselves, and save the magistrate the trouble of hunting them from the earth. Marcus perhaps by this time knows that they will not in that way release him from the toil of massacring them. And he might have known it a quarter of a century before the Lyonnese persecution. For at that time Justin Martyr published an Apology, addressed to the Senate, but making honourable mention of both Marcus and Pius, in which, at the very opening, he explains why the Christians, who find their world so miserable, and are so sure of being well placed when they leave it, do not go away by their own deed. His reasons are these two :—1. Here we are soldiers at our post, and have no right to leave it till the Captain, the Lord of life, call us away ; and 2. by remaining here in sufferings, we may benefit those who inflict them on us. Justin was writing immediately after having witnessed, in a Roman court of justice, the enormity of a magistrate ordering innocent men away to death merely because they were professing Christians. And in the tumult of his resentment of foul wrong he may have forgotten, what no doubt he had read in the *Phædo* of his old master Plato, that the two reasons he now gave against a suicide of Christians were precisely the two reasons, recorded by Plato, which had been given by Socrates, in his parting words to his disciples, in answer to the question, Why *he* had not sought death by his own hands, instead of accepting it from Athenian executioners. One way or other, Marcus no doubt knows well enough why the Christians give him the trouble of remaining alive. But, then, why speak of that as “obstinacy” ? And still more, why speak of it as an “obstinacy” that makes men prepared to die ?

One thing he may now be assured of, namely, that this “endurance,” which he calls “obstinacy,” is *unconquerable*. He has made abundant “trial of their faith.” He has in this way been giving *all* his “days” to “the practice of virtue.” Not only there have been the “great” persecutions of Lyons and Smyrna. Detailed persecutions, of which there is no record, may have been going on continually or frequently. That occasion, of Justin’s writing his Apology, might have arisen any day in the reign of an emperor known to favour

such practices. It needed only that a magistrate should be officious; or that some private person should turn informer, as on that occasion a heathen husband had informed against his Christian wife, in order to get rid of her by martyrdom. In the Court, some one cried out against the injustice of punishing innocent men for no crime, under, he said, a Senate which was "holy" (*Sacrosanctus*), and an emperor who was "pious" (Antoninus P.), whose colleague, the Cæsar, was called "the philosopher." The magistrate thereupon simply asked him, "Are you, too, a Christian?" and on his answering that he was, ordered him off to execution with the others. It is perfectly clear that the "obstinacy" is invincible. The women are just as obstinate as the men. That wife, who was informed against by her husband, did not flee; but was arranging her worldly affairs as permitted by law, thus calmly preparing for her trial. So a hundred years after *Perpetua*, in Carthage, will not shrink; though she have a new-born infant with her in prison; and her own father, a heathen, plays the tempter, with all paternal authority and endearments, imploring her to deny that "name." She will not; but endures the torture patiently—seeming not to feel it; until at last she obtains the mercy-stroke of death. She had not much temptation to remain in this world; though it must have been terrible to leave her infant among its dark "pollutions." The narrator states that, of all her connections, her father was the only one who did not desire her death! Still, she did not go away by her own action, but "endured as seeing the I AM who is invisible."

But does not all this bring to view in the Christians the thing which Marcus has been so admiring in "*that soul*," (!) namely, if it is not for the present to be "dispersed," or otherwise taken away from this life, then, a preparedness to *remain* in this life? And, further, the sort of "piety" which we find in his *Meditations* is full of expressions of resignation to providence and to God, such that, if we had not known he does not believe in a God, nor in a divine government in history, we might imagine that we are reading a very weak dilution of the Book of Psalms. And here, in the Christians, is that very thing, as a reality of faith and hope and love, the dependence on God's fatherly goodness, the acquiescence

Perpetua

in the sovereign will of God, which he faintly echoes in his words. Why, if the shadow be so excellent in his estimation, does he not rejoice in thinking that the substance of it is among his subjects, or anywhere in the earth or the universe? Why *should* he take trouble to destroy them? Why not rather seek their multiplication?

Gibbon states that those philosophers were free from influence of the superstitions of the vulgar. Perhaps it would have injured the flow of his grandiose declamation if he had for a moment considered what he was saying. He must have well enough known, for instance, that Celsus, though probably an atheist, was superstitious, believing in magic:—witness the fact of his ascribing the miracles of Christ to magic learned in Egypt. And Gibbon cannot have been ignorant of the notorious fact, that Marcus, “the philosopher,” whom he expressly calls an “atheist,” was abjectly superstitious. When matters began to look dark for his empire, he went to such excess in sacrificing to the gods *he did not believe in*, as to incur the ridicule of his own soldiery and subjects. Though he had no real belief, he had some superstitious *feeling*, without the respectability of belief. And that, no doubt, a sort of dread of the anger of non-existing gods, may have entered into the spirit of his (theological) persecution of the Christians. His long reign in the highest glory of world empire was, *by him*, darkened with persecutions: there was in it more of the endeavour, by brute violence of empire, to destroy the nature of the soul, than there ever has been in any other reign of mortal man on earth. And the spirit of that darkness, which overspread the world like an angel of death, may have been a weak, blind, vulgar superstition without faith, in the heart of this idolised “philosopher,”—whom Gibbon plainly is in his own mind comparing with one whom we will not name in this connection.

But is there not a deeper grief in the “soul” of this “philosopher,” than the injury done by Christianity to gods which are not? We now observe, that in stating why the Christians are not afraid of death, *he does not mention* that they do not believe in death; while perhaps they are not, like him, so weakly superstitious as to be afraid of what they do not believe in. Yet he knows that what they believe in is not

death, but resurrection. We have seen that he knows this, in that it is *the resurrection* doctrine that he persecutes at Lyons and Vienne. He knows quite well that they do not believe in death, nor fear it. Just about this time another philosopher, Athenagoras, has published an Apology, which he calls an "Embassy," and addresses to this Marcus. There he answers the customary calumnies against the Christians, about *Atheism* (on which Marcus may well be sensitive), and (Edipean intercourse, and Thyestean feasts. He assures him that the Christians are good subjects, who in their assemblies habitually pray for God's blessings on the empire and on its rulers. And he reminds him that the Christians ask nothing for themselves, but merely to live in the world, with the same freedom to profess their doctrines which is allowed to philosophers in the profession of theirs. And if Marcus have been led by this to make any inquiry, he may find that this other philosopher is the author of an *Oration* on the resurrection, in which he answers objections to the Christian doctrine; such as, the objection, that the doctrine is absurd, because, how can a body come to life again after it has been destroyed by fire or by wild beasts? But there is no need of his making any special inquiry as to this matter. That the Christians believe in resurrection, and always have done so, is notorious; even at Tübingen; much more, among "philosophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoics," who have heard Paul preaching at Athens.

How comes it, then, that he *makes no mention* of the resurrection doctrine, when he is explaining (to himself?—"soliloquy") why they do not fear death? He knows perfectly well that the resurrection is what makes them fearless. Ridicule of the resurrection was the reasoning which he committed to his apostles and evangelists, the beasts and birds of prey. Why, then, does he say nothing about it now; but speaks nonsense about obstinacy? Is it possible that this "philosopher," the "imperial devotee," the transcendental Stoic, should *hate* the resurrection so that he shuns the very name of it?—*Tantæne animis cælestibus iræ?*

Marcus had the same irritating perplexity as other magistrates, arising out of the fact that the Christians absolutely refused to conform to the state religion. And he may have

seen that the resurrection belief was what supported them in their "endurance." Thus the man who was so abruptly sent away to death, *apud acta* by the magistrate in Justin's presence, thanked the magistrate for giving him his death; because that was a permission to go away home from this bad unhappy world to the heavenly Father. But the stoical discipline, the *askesis* or practical training of the system, was intended to make the philosopher superior to feeling. "Apathy"—feelinglessness—was the crowning attainment of the Stoic. Why, then, is not Marcus "apathetic" *now*—when he comes in sight of the Christians, and the resurrection, and their consequent preparedness for either life or death? And it is not merely that he has not the weakness of feeling. He seems to have the far more fatal weakness of want of feeling. He is said to have been benevolent. But he had no right as a Stoic to be sympathetic. The system (Zeller) forbidding a man to be under the influence of feeling for himself, consistently forbade him to be under the influence of feeling for others: Prescription of Apathy was consistently carried out into prohibition of sympathy. And we thus can understand how it was possible for this philosopher calmly to look on the most dreadful sufferings of the Christians; because, in so far as he really was a Stoic, he was feelingless, having a *stone* heart. But what we see in Marcus is not only want of sympathy, but apparently antipathy. Paul's expression for feelinglessness, Eph. iv. 19 (*ἀπηλγηκότες*), is not "apathy." It describes a condition of heart which probably has been brought about in a different manner from that of the stoical ascetic discipline; although (ver. 18) the *real cause* which he assigns for it, "alienation from the life of God through the ignorance that was in men," was certainly in existence wherever Stoicism was in force. And feelinglessness is a very dangerous condition. Even though it had not itself been really death to be an unfeeling ghost, a ghost is dangerously near to breaking out into a beast. Accordingly, if it be merely the ghost that we see in the study, writing down the "meditations," *controversial* "soliloquising,"—in the open field of life, where they had practical dealings with him at Lyons and Vienne, what the Christian found in this "philosopher" was the Beast. The dogs and vultures which

devoured the carcasses had no hatred of the Christians. Marcus had a strong *feeling* of antipathy to the resurrection.

Having removed his disguise of being an emperor, and of being a philosopher, we must now remove his last disguise, of being a man. What has turned this man from stone into vulture? The resurrection doctrine contradicted his philosophy. The "endurance" of Christians made a fool of it (1 Cor. i. 20). The great attainment, of not being afraid of death, was now quite a common thing. Instead of people wondering at this emperor, who could say fine things about not being afraid to die, because death was only the bursting of a bubble, and life was only a vain show; they now might be laughing at him in their sleeves, since here were commonplace men, women, children, slaves, Blandinas, who *did* what he spoke about. They *showed* themselves ready to endure any evil that any creature could inflict; while yet they had not hearts of stone, but hearts of flesh. They were ready to die, not as believing life was a vain thing, but holding it to be a transcendently great and serious business, which they meant to go on with to all eternity. "Apathy" is all very well when there is no cause for irritation. But what if a hedge schoolmaster, uplifted to the skies by his glory of being able to read with the help of laborious spelling, should find small children reading trippingly without any spelling?—Massacre them!—massacre them! When one's own philosophy is being made the laughing-stock of one's own subjects, it is time to show who is "master of the thirty legions;" then it may appear that, as they say in America, "There's a great deal of human nature in man." The stone of which the stony heart is made, is ice; and ice, if only there be application of heat, may be turned into explosion that shall be volcanic in destructiveness. Stoicism is not forgetful of the *spretæ injuria formæ*. And as to that volcanic eruption of Lyons and Vienne,—the *odium theologicum*, against the resurrection, of a "philosopher" who does not believe in God, there is the further question—Does he *hate* the "unknown" God whom Socrates so longed to know?

The heart of flesh, which this new religion provided, was a capacity of feeling. And the Christian's God was a being

toward whom an heart of flesh could cherish and exercise the *affections* of love, and reverence, and gratitude. At the same time the man, whom the Christian saw in his neighbour, was in his degree an appropriate object of a kindred *affection*, being a person, free, rational, immortal, with a wondrous career before him, of immeasurable possibilities of bliss or woe; at the very lowest and worst, he was a prodigal son of God. But the man of Stoicism was but a bubble, whose life was a vain show, and his death, the vanishing of a vapour. How *could* there be any real affection toward such a *thing*? The stoical God in like manner was a mere thing; in the last expression, only a phrase; an abstraction representing the totality of things—like a mathematical symbol for “infinity.” The pietism of Marcus is only a sort of natural religiousness, putting a sort of half-belief in Providence and God into his life in spite of the system, which he did not understand. As for the system itself, making humanity to be a bubble, and deity to be a phrase, it really had nothing in it of strength to repress the lava torrent of rage against what was offensive to the imperiousness of empire, while it wounded the pride of a vain-glorious philosophising to the quick.

Instead of a human feeling of pleasures and pains, and fellow-feelings with others in their experiences of natural good and evil, this philosophy placed *virtue*, the love of *right*, etc. But that was mere hollow declamation. *Duty* does not come in place of love. It is love:—Love God, love thy neighbour: “the fulfilling of the law is love.” Reduce a man into a ghost, with an heart of stone; and teach him that his neighbour is a bubble, and deity a phrase. What is the use of talking about “virtue” and “duty” to the scarecrow fiend? We know how it went with Stoicism. At least the system produced a stagey self-sufficient pride, the pagan pharisaism which was felt to be intolerable even among the Romans, who at their best had a certain affinity for that mode of worldliness. It was a heartless thing. Men could not endure it: not even in themselves:—suicide was not uncommon among them. Stoicism made life to *bore* them to death. A human ghost can never have contented happiness within itself, nor diffuse a blessing round.

Epicurism was more humanely genial, encouraging natural

affections and enjoyments. But it tended to run into beastliness, which was about as bad as ghostliness, if not worse:—it produced a similar petrification of the heart in selfish worldliness. And so, as fatally as Stoicism, it took away the heart of present life, as well as the hope of life to come. There was nothing to reverence in a universe without God. There was nothing to honour in a manhood without freedom, immortality, worship. *Life was indeed a bubble.* And, excepting those who struggled to maintain the Socratic tradition, and keep Platonism from running to seed in the speculative “nothing” of Neo-Platonism, there remained only *Eclecticism*. Eclecticism had no doctrine of its own. It was a bee that seemed to gather honey from every opening flower. The fact is, that it was a bird of gay plumage, which can imitate any songster in the forest, and has no song of its own, and is called the mocking-bird. It ran to seed in scepticism (Pyrrhonism; at present known as Agnosticism).

The hollow stagey Stoicism of Marcus Aurelius may be taken as one type of the *lack of moral earnestness* in a philosophy which is worldly. Its lack of real moral earnestness is shown by want of *fairness*; and its unfairness appeared in most revolting form, where the philosopher had the power of an empire in the great crime of Lyons and Vienne. A greater crime, excepting that of Calvary, has surely never been perpetrated under the sun. And that mortal violence, with accompaniment of dogs and vultures, is one type of unfairness exhibited by philosophy in this great crisis of contending for the freedom of the human soul at the turning-point of the moral history of the world.

Another type of unfairness, evincing lack of moral earnestness, appears in *Celsus*. It is not certain that he is that Celsus of the period who is known to have been an Epicurean. His assault on Christianity might have been written by a man holding some such view of the universe and of man as had a sort of puzzle-headed possession of the mind of Marcus Aurelius. His unfairness appears in his manner of handling the matter of Christianity. He had a real acquaintance with this religion, as set forth in its own books of both Testaments. But he did not make a fair use of his knowledge. He misrepresented facts; he put the worst face upon things; he

did not set himself to consider the matter judicially, according to its own nature, on the face of it and in the heart of it. His work contained, as Baur has told us, to a large extent what have been the stock-in-trade objections of infidelity down to our time. And Origen, in his answers to those objections, calls them the *calumnies* of Celsus. So far as can be ascertained, this was the only real attempt of a philosopher in that age to meet Christianity on the open field of argument; though there was more than one exhibition of a sort of scolding in a grandiose manner addressed to this new religion on the score of its presumption in existing, after the philosophers had made up their minds that all the religions are false. If, then, Marcus represent the unfairness of philosophy as exhibited in mortal violence, Celsus may stand for the same unfairness as shown in calumny or misrepresentation.

The mocking-bird of Eclecticism appears in Lucian (see above, p. 27). He was contemporary with Justin Martyr, A.D. 150; so that his *ridicule* came, as a precursory skirmisher, somewhat earlier than the calumny of Celsus and the violence of Marcus. Justin was the realised ideal of a candid soul, open to truth as the sunflower is to the sun. His moral earnestness appeared, not only in his adherence to the truth when he found it, but in his previous long search for it, as for lost life, or for the Holy Grail. Lucian was not morally earnest. In his *Dialogues* we see that he was not without vision. His eulogy on Demosthenes is noble, showing that he could appreciate greatness of soul. But with him it was—*Vidco meliora, proboque, deteriora sequor*. Morally he was a small creature—*Græculus esuriens*. He was a sample of the talent of degenerate Greece, patronised and fondled by the Romans, as an accomplished female slave might be by a wealthy family, whom her accomplished refinement sometimes makes to feel the awkwardness of their rusticity. It is not certain that he meant his *Peregrinus* as an assault on Christianity. It may perhaps have been intended only for a *jeu-d'esprit* on the part of a literary man glad to have a new subject for his art; as the painter frequented the guillotine executions in the Reign of Terror. We have placed him along with the artist who drew the

graphite caricature on the palace of Severus. Ridicule, though there should be in it no malignant purpose, is essentially unfair when the truth has need of seriousness; as if making monkey gestures and grimaces behind a preacher in the pulpit. And no doubt there must have been much of the unfairness of ridicule in that age on the part of talented men without moral earnestness who had a gift of speech or writing.

It is pleasing to recall to mind such names as Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Aristides, and Quadratus. They remind us that many philosophers *may* have seen the wisdom of God in the gospel, though (1 Cor. i. 20-28) Paul does not seem to have found it so: he *had* a philosophy (1 Cor. ii. 6), but (vers. 8-10) *they* were not prepared for it, being worldly. In the first age the philosophers who became Christians did not all, like Justin, retain the philosopher's gown. They blended with the mass of the Christian community. When we speak of philosophy as opposing the gospel, we mean a *worldly* philosophy, as we meant a *worldly* magistracy and a *worldly* religion. And now, before taking a concluding view of that worldly philosophy as a whole, we recall to mind the question: What would have become of mankind if the world had been left to that Stoicism, Epicurism, Eclecticism? The question is important. For, *excepting the gospel, there is really nothing else for the world at this hour but the same round of Stoicism, Epicurism, and Eclecticism* (which is another name for non-belief or scepticism). That there is no personal God, nor freedom nor immortality of man, that his life is a vain show, ending in dissolution into the system of nature,—seems a sorry evangel for those who labour and are heavy laden. Pyrrhonism (or "Agnosticism") is not more helpful: a man is not healed of leprosy, nor saved from a burning ship, by believing that there is no solid ground for belief. Justin Martyr, who had experience of the philosophers of that age, did not think well of them. As a class they have not left a good reputation in history. One of them might have sat for the picture of "The Elephant" in Scott's *Count Robert of Paris*; or of Artemidorus in Lockhart's *Valerius*. They are said to have been selfish and worldly, in greed, and vanity, and pride, with meanness of adulation for the great, and

flatteries for the commonalty. This reminds us of what Antigonus said of the Greek orators after Demosthenes; that they were like what remains of an animal that has been offered in sacrifice—nothing but the tongue and the digestive organs. Before them the Sophists were those who had really murdered Socrates, “done to death by slanderous tongues.” But far the most fatal witness borne against them is that of a great admirer of them, Edward Gibbon, in saying that they regarded all the religions as being equally false. If that be so, then, to say that they were without moral earnestness is but a weak way of saying what has to be the truth, that as a class they must have been basely and thoroughly unprincipled—without a particle of even genuine self-respect or natural pride of manhood.

If they believed the religions to be false, their plain duty was to say so, to bear witness of the falsehood, and, in case of need, to seal their testimony with their blood. Such was the action of “the prince of philosophers.” Socrates did not believe the religions to be simply false. He believed that there was a truth in them, and he was careful to honour them correspondingly to that belief. He really was far more of a believer in the religion of the Athenians than were those who procured his condemnation as introducing new gods. But he saw that there was a falsehood in the prevalent religionism. And he did not dissemble what he saw. He bore witness to what truth he was enabled to know, even when the religions were so far condemned by it. And, like a true honest man, who cared for the life of mankind in the truth, he gave his life for what he believed. So of the simple Christians of the age of apologetics. Believing the old religions to be false, they refused to conform to them. They bore witness against them at the cost of their lives, sometimes of what was dearer than life.

What, then, as to the philosophers as a class? For ages mankind was dependent on them in the central civilisation of the world. From the Socratic awakening to inquiry as to fundamentals, down to the coming of Christ, they were the teachers, the trusted pioneers and chiefs. And in their estimation mankind were blinded and enslaved by religions which were false. Did they then protest against the lie, or

testify against the ghostly delusions, to save the life of mankind from that woful waste? No, but *they conformed* to the religions—and saved their own skins. The true original Vicar of Bray was a philosopher. Rather, he was the whole order of philosophers, such as they showed themselves in that historical period of the world's dependence on their leadership. While they mocked at the very conception of a God, they went on with what on their part was an impious form of worshipping. On the roll of martyrologies there came to be placed the names of philosophers like Justin; but these were first believing Christians. ("They hanged your father," said some one brutally to Cromwell's daughter. "Yes," she answered proudly, "but he was dead first.") Of philosophers who were not Christian, not one suffered for his protestation against the falsehood, on account of their protestation against which a countless multitude of simple Christians died. Even crazy Peregrinus died, not for truth as a philosopher, but for vanity; and his very vanity was vainglorious emulation of the Christians' glory of the truth.

In the history of that time philosophers keep well in the background. It was the crisis of the world's life as hinging on the question, What is truth? In such a crisis they were the natural leaders. Socrates, indeed, may be said to have been a believer. So were the great poets of his time, Æschylus and Sophocles, who were the "prophets" (*vates*) of the people. So had been the really great poets, Pindar and Homer, before them. It is within the limits of Christian faith to believe that in the Christian sense of the expression a man like Socrates "knew God." According to the gospel, salvation is by faith, and faith cometh by hearing. But (Confession of Faith, chap. x. 3) there are exceptional cases, of those in whom that ordinary mode of procedure is a natural impossibility. And if Socrates be not sure that he knows God, that certainly is no proof that God may not have known him, and led him by ways that he knew not; as the lamp in the *Pilgrim's Progress* did not know that an unseen hand was supplying it with oil. Plainly, it is not in the plan of God to give a clear and satisfying knowledge of Himself other than "through the door" (John x. 1, etc.), by the straight open way of rational communication, a word, of supernatural reve-

*Difference in conversion
between philosophers
and Christians.*

lation. But it may, nevertheless, be His pleasure to give to some individuals a knowledge, a guidance, an instinct, such, that in the judgment they shall not be found to have been "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them."

But that was only one glow-worm in the night where we need sunlight of day to fill the world. After the time of Socrates religious belief goes on dying out of the heart of the peoples. And the philosophers on whom they come to be dependent more and more appear to be worse than useless—"blind leaders of the blind." They had no light in themselves, and they accelerated the tendency to general disbelief by their countenancing delusion, and making a mockery of seriousness by conforming to religions which they did not believe. To a large extent in our day men who do not believe the gospel have a sort of naturalistic belief like that of the Epicureans and the Stoics. But it has in it no real *stamina* of spiritual life even for the present. Although the Academicism of our Science Associations should have monumental fruits magnificent as the works of Aristotle, that has really nothing in it for the soul, the true life of a man. A dabbling dilettante eclecticism is, in the heart of it, a universal scepticism, without the intellectual fibre of Empiricus of Hume. But there may be doubters really earnest, in the mental and moral condition of the better sort of Platonisers really seeking upward for the truth which feeds the soul, though in an atmosphere so ghostly thin as that of the Neo-Platonic formula, which found the substance of all truth and goodness and beauty reducible into characterless "*being* equal to *nothing*." The Platonising Justin was made a Christian, a new man, by seeing men ready to die, upon the faith of Christ, in the service of the living God.

SEC. 5. *Excursion: relative condition of Christian character at that time.*

In the time of a great war, the home life of families goes on as usual, and is not chronicled. The home life of the second-century Christianity may in large measure not be represented by its literature which has come down to us.

the value of philosophy.
A poor value indeed.

The momentous conflict of the period, the wondrous things of the new revelation, naturally absorbed the mind of the writers. These gather into their writings only what is above the plane, or off the lines of ordinary occurrence. As for non-Christian literature: Christianity at first was obscure and insignificant, a kingdom coming "without observation," as when the King was quietly laid in the manger. Hence a historian so masterly as Tacitus can write about what now is seen to have been the great event of Nero's reign, without taking the trouble to obtain any real knowledge of the character and principles of the principal actor in it. The amount of our information as to the literal common life of the second-century Christians is inconsiderable.

In forming an estimate of the Christian character of that time, we must remember that the normal Christian of our day ought to be much more complete in rounded resemblance to Christ than the normal Christian of Christ's day. Bishop Selwyn has an observation (*Life*) which is important in this relation. He is speaking of the dissatisfaction sometimes felt with the comparatively low type of Christian character exhibited by mission converts; such as in the South Sea Islands. Among the Christians recently reclaimed from heathenism there may be exhibited features of unloveliness which would be reckoned very strange, if not intolerable, in the old formed Churches. On which the Bishop remarks, that we have to consider, *what is reasonably to be expected* in a community recently brought out of cannibal heathenism; and that to bring such a community up to the level of ordinary Churches long formed, may be the gradual educative work of generations.

Such converts have pollutions of heathenism remaining in them. So far they still are blind slaves of lust. They have much animal life, only beginning to be subdued and ordered, with little of intelligence or of formed spiritual habit for the task. Though they should be really regenerate, yet "it takes three generations to make a gentleman." It may take generations of Christian nurture to bring the type of individual character up to the level of those old formed Churches, where a certain Christian character is almost a ready-made inheritance from the past. The side-lights we have in the Apostolic Epistles, *e.g.* in earnest deprecation of mean

The force of the fact
underlying the present.

vices and coarse common-place sins, may show us, that in that first age there was occasion for the saying, "this kind goeth not out but by fasting and prayer."

We shall fix our attention on *moral earnestness*, as one feature of that primitive Christianity. Perhaps we may not clearly see much more. The outbreak of heresies and such things in that early time, at first sight so amazing, may appear to have been but a natural result of the vast intellectual and moral persecution of the age, when as yet there was little of matured Christian habit of thought; while the converts from heathenism had in them almost nothing of previously formed *theological* mind:—an *Epistle to the Gentiles*, like the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, finding this new religion in their old religion is inconceivable. And on close inspection the "heresies" are seen to be only as the storm-clouds which may fill the air when winter is boisterously passing away before the spring: *the real history* of progressive life is that of the advancing spring upon the earth. This real Christianity, quietly advancing, was itself exposed to misconstructions, and liable to disturbing influences, which might occasionally send it in abnormal directions. Considering the frightful injustice to which the Christians were subjected, and the uncalculating enthusiasm of that new life to which they had been awakened as by "the trump of God," we might have expected to find here and there an outbreak into some wild sort of Nihilism. But there was nothing even of the milder fanaticism of the Reformation Anabaptists. Lockhart, introducing into his *Valerius* a sort of Balfour of Burley, shows unacquaintance with that primitive Christianity. It is a most astonishing illustration of the stable poise of the "endurance" making "self-possession" in the "souls" of the persecuted, that, in the history of that age, we do not find that they anywhere made so much as a local disturbance, under the proverbially "maddening" influence of oppression. There we see an illustration of their *moral earnestness*.

It consisted in *thoroughness* of practical adherence to truth directing life to the highest end. It was in that world the real desideratum, the *fulcrum* of restoration, the *ποῦ στῶ* for uplifting the fallen mankind from its degenerate misery. The mere *will* of the magistracy, expressed in law, is in the last

all way earnestness compared
 with the flippant jests of
 the heathen world.

analysis only the prevalent mind of the nation ; and that mind was *itself* the thing that had to be changed, in the spirit of it, for salvation of the people's life. "The religions" had lost whatever savour of religion they may once have had. They were not by the peoples now believed in to good purpose. They operated in the heathen mind only as a "superstition," effectively equivalent to demoniacal possession (*deisidaimonia* was thus not a misnomer). And philosophy had proved to be worse than useless as a guide of human life. Even in intention it had fallen from the spirit, so earnestly inculcated and exhibited by Socrates, of serious search for truth, such as may rightly mould the life. It had sunk—like many a "literary career"—into ambitious vainglorious dilettanteism, with no practical purpose but that of selfish worldliness—of greed, or vanity, or pride. Mere Academicism, which at bottom is non-belief, gave no fulcrum for reality of life. The prevalent dogmatic systems "of the Stoics and of the Epicureans," being rooted in mere naturalism, made life itself to be a poor thing, contemptible if not vile. Hence the frequency of suicide, as if life were not worth living in either ghostliness or beastliness, though the degradation should not run into unseemly excesses. And the noble Platonising speculation, an eagle striving to soar without atmosphere, only occasioned a sense of failure to apprehend that for which men are apprehended ; so that—witness Justin's case—Socrates might at the utmost be a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ: the wise man preparing his fellows for "the wisdom of God."

The thoroughness of resolute conviction, and downright simple earnest in adherence to it, was seen by Justin Martyr in the Christian's readiness to suffer death for the faith ; as it has been seen in our time, in martyrdom for the gospel, in Madagascar, the South Sea Islands, and elsewhere. And that, in Christian character, was really the grand *desideratum* for the fallen world's recovery. But the unworldliness of the moral earnestness occasioned antipathy in a world which was worldly. And as there are generous fruits which have to be bitter before they are sweet, so this character, in its first crude formation and energetic manifestation, may not have been the most winningly attractive in aspect that can be imagined. The Christians loved one another in a manner and measure

that were wonderful to heathens ; and to heathens who needed help they were the kindest people upon earth. But the conditions of the time made it natural, if not obligatory, for them to abstain from not a few simple natural pleasures of life. The idolatry, and other pollutions, which filled the whole ordinary life of the peoples, made it necessary for Christians in large measure to keep aloof from the social existence of their neighbours (so Tertullian, *De Spectaculis*). This, along with the constrained semi-privacy of their own fellowship, and the *real unworldliness* of Christianity, caused them to be regarded as if they had been a sort of spectres, literally as well as spiritually "not of this world." At the same time the surroundings of their life of chronic war with evil amid stormy peril, may have imparted to the outgoings of their moral earnestness a character of angularity and harshness, as well as melancholy sombreness, which did not really represent its inward nature in the fountain.

Still, *the resolute unshrinking strength of purity* was what mankind had need of ; it was what gave to the great soul of Tertullian, and others of a like mind, a deep joy for that a man-child was born into the world. This is what we see in that Bithynian infancy of the Church, which looks unblenching on the frowning face of Roman inquisition armed with death. The simplicity of this Solemn League and Covenant,—resolved in God's name that we shall all be conscientiously careful as to man's plain duties of common life toward our neighbour—has to us, familiar with the Christian life of congregations, at first sight an aspect of disappointing poverty or boldness ; although it would be a great thing if Christians at communion times would *really* renew *that covenant*. But to those familiar as Pliny was with the common life of heathenism as it then was, that may have appeared as a new creation of the life of men. And we see at the root of it what he further reported on—that strangely simple purity of worshipping the living God in (*sacramento—military* obedience) the redeeming Christ as King. The fiery trial brings to view the fact, that it is the surface manifestation of a character, of thoroughness in conscience toward God, and loyalty to *His* truth ; such that ordinary human beings—simple men, women, slaves even children—will die rather than so much as go

through an empty form of religious reverence toward what is not God. At that precise moment the turning-point of all time for the world's one hope of life, the real thing needful, was unshrinking *truth* "in the inward parts." And any surface angularity or ruggedness in manner that there may have been, it would be childishly irrational to regard as materially detracting from the inestimable value for the happiness as well as dignity in moral wholesomeness, of human life, to mankind in the following generations, of that thoroughness of unshrinking truthfulness on the part of Christians of the primitive age. In *Never too late to Mend*, Jacky, the savage, is hacking with his hatchet at a yellow stone, which he does not know to be gold. So in Bithynia did Pliny the "philosopher" under "the good" Emperor Trajan.

When there is a strenuous vitality pervading the organisation of men's practice as a whole, little rigours of detail are felt as nothing but a sort of frosty kindliness, as of the world's new life in spring. The sons of Maccabeus will make no complaint of harshness, though the pampered sons of Eli may, if a rose-leaf happen to be crumpled on the pillow of their self-indulgence. Knowing what miseries can come out of limp, falsetto softness, and what real happiness results from a high-toned strenuousness,—as the primrose flourishes under shade of guardian prickly furze,—we may rejoice in little rigours which are symptomatic of that strenuousness, and which may be the guardians of that happiness in a simple wisdom that is higher than worldly. In ancient and modern times respectively, two nations have made their homes on earth to be the two famous lands of song. They thus are shown to have been upon the whole the nations having most of happiness in life. Otherwise, they both have been notably characterised by little rigours, of a prudential strenuousness in professed fear of God and regard for man. And for this their children, who may have outgrown it, and yet are found everywhere prospering in consequence of it, rise up in the gate and bless them. But for nations in the enjoyment of their own land there can hardly ever be such a call to strenuous earnestness, rigorously high toned, as there was in the experience of the primitive Christians (1 Pet. ii. 11): who were "strangers and pilgrims," few and far between,

battling against a hostile world for the achievement, to Christendom, of a definitive footing upon earth, and to the human soul, of a conceded right to be in freedom under the sun.

Finely cultured gentlemen like George Herbert might, without finality, feel something discordant to them in a typical Puritan; though in such cases as that of Lucy Hutchison and her colonel, it appeared (cp. *The Draytons and the Davenants*) that the puritanic thoroughness is compatible with culture, fine and high, of noble men and lovely women, in a society to which that of Socrates and his Xantippé, and even of his disciples, is (through mere coarseness) an offensive anti-climax. But though they should be (like Oliver Cromwell) homely and rough spun, only earnest praying men could do the heavy work of that day for England's liberation from the absolutism which leaned upon a gay and gallant worldliness. The transcendentalism of a Pascal could not fill up for France the place of an iron-handed De la Noue. And English exiles in a later day saw what had been the true salvation of their country when the invincible legions of Spain, formed under the discipline of the great Captain Gonsalvo, were driven from the field like chaff by old soldiers of the Commonwealth. The primitive Church was called to a rough battle, in which a firm fibre of resolute manhood, a dauntless persistent force of character asserting conviction, was really the one thing in demand. The battle was for bare life, to begin with. If the life be once secured, with safeguard of an iron strength, the softer beauties and more winning graces may be found to come in their due order of *value* and of time (the tabernacle will rise when Israel's life is saved). But for a restored Eden, even for the most delicate of its lovely flowers, the first requisite is fencing, clearing, deep-soil ploughing, with fundamental planting and sowing. Beauty, where there is true life, comes unbidden as the bloom of health. And it must not be forgotten that a thing most beautiful in itself, the thing whose unearthly beauty won Justin Martyr's heart for the gospel, is simple readiness to die for truth.

The outward condition of the Christians in a world all dark and threatening adds to the wonder of their "endur-

ance," and of the success of it. The success was dependent on the persistent faithfulness of simple men adventuring on an amazing enterprise of conquest. Were ever men engaged on such another enterprise so fitted to make the heart sink in the very contemplation of it, so seemingly forlorn in utter hopelessness of disproportion of the means to the task? It was, again, Moses going to conquer Egypt with his staff. First in their sad experience was that exile in the home, excommunication from the heart of those who by nature are the nearest, and with whom the human heart seeks comforting strength in the outward storms of life. Thus in that case of the wife, described by Justin Martyr. She and her husband, when heathens, had been living together in "pollutions." When she became a Christian, living (it goes without saying) in purity, she earnestly entreated him to discontinue his impure life, warning him of the coming judgment according to works. But his manner of life came to be so revolting to her in its personal relations, that she resolved to seek a legal separation from him. At first she was persuaded by friends to abandon that purpose, in the hope of some amendment on his part. Finding, however, that when absent in Alexandria he was not reforming, but going on from bad to worse, she at last took definitive legal action toward the separation. And thus it was that he turned informer against her, in the hope of procuring her death as a Christian. At the time of Justin's writing she was availing herself of a breathing time, permitted by the Roman law, for disposal of her worldly estate before being tried for that capital crime. She, a Roman matron, happened, so far, to have some privilege of law. But in her case, and that of others whom Justin saw ordered off to death by Ourbikos (no doubt, *Urbicus, prætor urbanus*), we are bewildered on reflecting that these poor dispersed waifs, which drift across our path like lost birds in the moonlight of a snow-storm, are the grand army campaigning for conquest of the world!

The Christians, if (1 Cor. vii. 11) flung out of the society which was theirs by nature, had not such a resort as our mission converts have in India,—though there the excommunication is very trying to flesh and blood. There the "mission village" is a new home; and the convert,

The result in Rome &c. 1472.

placed under shield of what, to his view, is the mightiest empire in the world, finds himself in the genial bosom of a Christendom which to his feeling is omnipresent as the atmosphere; his whole care is undertaken by the Christians of the imperial race. The primitive Christian was alone in the world. Outcast from his natural holdings on life, he was thrown adrift, like Socrates, even in this life, on a frail raft, into what was to him a dark unknown, as that unseen world into which the philosopher was venturing to go in dying. The dark unknown, upon which the Christians were cast, had to be transformed by them into "a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." And the darkness, to their apprehension, was not simply as of a chaos, but rather as of a hell upon earth.

The original of John's description of the world, as "lying in wickedness," admits of the rendering, "lying in the wicked one." And that rendering corresponds to the view which primitive Christians took of the condition of the world in which they were "strangers and pilgrims." They regarded it (Eph. ii. 1-3, vi. 10-14) as being literally a domain of Satan, which had to be delivered from death in sin. And their own position, as of men who were in spirit not of that world, though in it, may have been felt by them most painfully (cp. in 1 Cor. vii. the cases of slave and wife) when there was no possibility of outward separation from the world in its natural relationships. But the natural relationship of the world when closest in its pressure or embraces of impurity, was an outward thing, in which the Christian could be stainless as a sunbeam in a sepulchre. The darker world, too, of that invisible kingdom which pervaded this earth and its human populations, might be overcome. Then the iron would be tempered into steel. But only resolute moral earnestness could endure the fiery trial.

CHAPTER II.

THE RELIGION INWARDLY, WORKING A NEW CREATION OF MANKIND.

IN Justin Martyr we have the happiness of seeing that most beautiful thing, a candid soul. But soul, though uncandid or unfair, is to be seen in those who trample on its nature, as not aware of its origin and its destiny: in mocking Lucian, in calumniating Celsus, and even in Marcus when, writing down scholastic platitudes about evaporation of a bubble, and assuming sublimity of attitudes of "apathy" to be seen of men, he breaks out into volcanic outrage of theological fury against innocent subjects who believe in resurrection. We now shall see the restoration (Ps. li. 7) of impure soul into candour.

SEC. 1. *The work of faith (not miracle, but Christ).*

Looking at the respective parts of the three graces in 1 Thess. i. 3, relatively to the whole complex movement of Christianity in the soul's life, we might assign to the "work of faith" a place like that of *creation*,—fundamental origina- tive; as compared with which, the place of the "labour of love" would correspond to *providence*; and *prophecy*, with its word of promise, would have its analogue in the "patience of hope," as a persistence in both the work and the labour, animated and sustained by the assured expectation of the victor's crown awaiting both. We will not press the analogy beyond the present need. And for our present purpose we seek in it only a starting-point for consideration of the "faith" under certain of its aspects. As our investigation will be to a large extent at a distance from the centre, it is well for us at the outset to recognise the central fundamental

importance of this grace: as to which Christ has declared, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on (have faith in) Him whom He hath sent;" and John has solemnly recorded the finding, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

*ut
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The essential nature of the "faith" is *dependence*; as when (Ps. xl. 2) a man has his feet upon a rock, so that his goings are established, through his being able at every step to feel assured of the solidity of the ground he treads on. Even under the intellectual aspect of the faith, dependence is the heart of it: the "assent" even of a simply historical faith, is a reliance, on a ground (of faith), confidence in *trustworthiness* of the information or informant. Still more manifestly, the dependence comes into view, as being of the constitutive essence of the faith, when the faith appears as *receiving* a free gift, *reposing* on the faithfulness of a promiser, *consenting* to acceptance of an offer, *covenanting* with God, *clinging* to His offered mercy and His promised help.

For the purpose of our inquiry, we shall look at the faith, thus defined generally, only under aspects which appear to call for special notice at the present stage. And in especial, we shall begin with what ostensibly is a wide digression, mainly with reference to ecclesiastical miracles; under the form of negatively ascertaining what *the king*, upon which the faith relied, *was not*.

*is it
the question*

We may observe, to begin with, that it was *not on any wisdom or power of man*. The Church of that age had no great men, like Luther, or Peter the Hermit, or Mahomet. In the second century there is not one Christian of very extraordinary ability: unless we except Tertullian, who had not solidly balanced judgment for leadership of mankind in such a crisis. In the second century there was no scholar like Origen, nor statesman like Cyprian. It is a remarkable circumstance that in the century in which the battle of life was fought and won for mankind, after the apostles left the earth, there was no superlative leader, exercising a commanding influence over the whole Church, or over any wide region of Christendom. It was, like Inkermann, "a soldier's battle." The Christians, persecuted in localities, had there to fight it

out for themselves. Ordinary believers, a newly created commonalty of men and women, of whom very many were slaves and children, with *no commander but Christ*, no stay but God in Christ—such was the army of that faith, which was the victory that overcame the world.

Our special point here, however, is as regards *miracle*,—that the second-century Christians *had not miracle* to rely on; but simply the “name” of Jesus, the word of Christ. The subject of *ecclesiastical miracles* will furnish an important side-light on that of the evangelical and apostolic miracles of the New Testament. Misapprehensions in relation to it, which came to light in the controversy that began with Middleton’s once famous *Free Inquiry*, are still operative to evil effect, where perhaps the existence of them is not suspected. The second century is the best ground for study of the subject. And we will now pause to consider it with care.

Paul (1 Cor. xiii.) speaks of faith, hope, and charity as *abiding*; while certain supernatural gifts — “prophecy,” “tongues,” “knowledge” — are *cranescent*. Bishop Warburton (*Doctrine of Grace*, pp. 72, etc., 2nd ed.) connects this fact with the general view, that miraculous gifts were *intended* only for the initial period, and thus are discontinued since the establishment of Christianity in the world. We will inquire historically whether they were discontinued in fact.

With reference to the opinion of Christians, Gibbon makes the following statement:—

The Christian Church, from the time of the apostles and their first disciples, has claimed an uninterrupted succession of miraculous powers, the gift of tongues, of vision, and of prophecy, the power of expelling demons, of healing the sick, and of raising the dead (*Decline and Fall*, Bohn’s ed., vol. ii. pp. 35, 36).

This statement, in its obvious import, is made in reckless disregard of historical fact. It is contradicted by a statement on the same page, which is pushed into the obscure background of a footnote:—that “of the primitive miracles, the power of exorcising is the *only* one which has been assumed by the Protestants” (the italics are ours). The unscrupulous infidel pamphlet, which forms this part of the *Decline and Fall*, is read by many as the judicial deliverance

True.

of an historian. We saw the partisan's whitewashing of the foes of Christianity. He now aims directly at blackening Christianity, by ascribing to "the Christian Church, from the time of the apostles," a pretension which on the face of it is groundless and extravagant. It has been shown by Lord Hailes and others, that Gibbon, with great parade of learning, really wrote in ignorance of this subject, as well as under the influence of antipathetic prepossession. But the exposures are not known, and the popular history is read; its array of references being taken as proof that the author has studied the matter in the sources, and now is giving judgment according to evidence. One of the evidences of Christianity is its being so hated that such injustice is practised and not unwelcome:—*Populus vult decipi, et decipiatur*. We will consider the details one by one, in order to judge as to the whole allegation.

1. As to the *gift of tongues*. This needs only to be mentioned in passing. The subject is obscure. The thing itself makes no real appearance in history after the apostolic age. Very little of what is distinct is said about it in the second century; and the vague allusions do not countenance the construction which Gibbon (p. 36) forces upon them.

2. As to *visions and prophecies*. The primitive statements regarding these, addressed to heathens, have primary reference to the true divine oracles, which the Christians have in the utterances of prophets and apostles. As to their secondary bearing upon a gift of spiritual insight and utterance possessed by the Christians in their own persons, it ought to be remembered that a claim to possession of such gifts has been made on behalf of Christians in all ages. Christians have always believed (cp. Luke viii. 9, 10) that, to those receiving the grace of God, there is given a faculty of spiritual discernment, insight into the things of God and His unseen world, that is not possessed by the unregenerate worldly. But this "common grace" they regard as a specifically different thing from inspiration, that extraordinary gift through which the prophet or apostle had a miraculous knowledge. It is worth noting that in this relation Middleton, strangely if not significantly, professed not to know what is meant by "common

must of necessity be so.

grace." He could not afford to know it: it destroys the position of him and others here.

In times of high religious excitement, utterance is unguarded, and the unguarded utterance has to be construed in the light of history of the times. Even the "cannie" Scots have had their Peden's prophecies; and *will* have it that supernatural foresight was evinced by John Knox. Milton describes Knox as "the prophet of a nation." And according to Froude, the Reformer had one important qualification for prophecy, in that he never made mistakes. Among the statesmen of that time, says the historian, Murray perhaps was as pure as Knox, but Knox was the only one whose insight into men and things was always unerring. But it would be absurd, on account of such things, gravely to represent a claim to miraculous inspiration, exhibited in prediction of the incalculable, as having been really a part of the Scottish Reformation Christianity.

The claim to a spiritual insight, not possessed by the heathens, made on behalf of the Christians, was only subsidiary, in corroborative illustration of the main fact that a new supernatural wisdom had come to them in the Scriptures. There is no distinct allegation of particular prediction, tested by the result according to scriptural prescription (Deut. xviii. 18, 19). In one case a "revelation," given to the martyrs in the Lyonnese persecution, is on close inspection found to have come to them through 1 Tim. iv. 4. It was the *scriptural* wisdom of God, impressively "borne in" upon the mind of those Christians for the solution of a particular case of conscience. Origen in one place speaks of a "vision" (*ὁράσει τινά*) of things to come, given to a few whose walk with God is closest, in a manner which places that gift among the evidences of Christianity. For he places it along with still remaining *traces* (*ἵχνη*) of the original miraculous power, which accompanies the teaching of Christ and His apostles. Hetherington will speak in the same way about spiritual insight of rare souls among Scottish Covenanters, and Kennedy similarly with reference to "the fathers in Ross-shire." No one dreams of regarding such an utterance as showing that Scottish Christians claim to have among them the miraculous gift of prophecy. The primary substantive

evidence of prophecy is regarded as being in the Scriptures; the spiritual insight appearing in such rare souls is regarded as a corroborative illustration of the gift of a wisdom which is not of this world.

3. *Miracle of power* is here the testing matter. A general allegation, like that of Origen, regarding a rare gift of "vision," does not show that even the speaker seriously means that prophecy in the relevant sense of extraordinary supernatural wisdom, such as appears in fulfilled prediction of the incalculable, is an abiding possession of the Church. He may mean only that "common grace" is found in some individuals occasionally producing results analogous to the results of a rarely high degree of the natural gift of healing. The allegation of miracle of power was distinctly made by Irenæus and Tertullian as well as by Origen. But upon their few utterances Gibbon has erected a cloud of imagination, which by "the fallacy of references" he makes to look like a mountain of historical fact. The testing case of raising the dead is referred to only by Irenæus, in a passage which Gibbon misunderstands, and which (with support of a mistaken *reference*) is by this "historian" made the ground of ascribing to the *second-century Christians* an opinion which demonstrably was not held by them, and probably was not held by even Irenæus. The miracles believed in by the second-century Christians were works of healing, and of what they believed to be expulsion of evil spirits. That the works were done may be regarded as historical fact. That they were *miraculous* in the relevant sense of "extraordinary" supernatural attestations of Christianity, is an opinion of Tertullian and others which may have been mistaken. But to make that opinion the ground of a broad statement, that a claim to "uninterrupted succession of miraculous powers" has been made by "the Christian Church from the time of the apostles and their first disciples," is a shameful abuse of an "historian's" accident of position in having the ear of a confiding public. Of even that opinion, with reference to the one matter of healing the body and mind, there is not a trace among the "first disciples" of the apostles, nor until the third generation after the close of the apostolic age.

Regarding a claim to *miracle of power* in the second century,

we make the following notes:—(1) *Raising the dead* is a testing work. That is, of its miraculousness there is no possibility of doubt. And Gibbon states quite generally that a power to work *this* miracle has been made by the Christian Church in all ages. The statement is a shameful one. It is a mere audacity of groundless assertion. Gibbon gives no proof of it, and cannot, for there is not any shadow of proof of it to be found. But (*Decline and Fall*, vol. i. p. 37) he states that at the close of the second century “the resurrection of the dead was very far from being esteemed an uncommon event.” Even of this he gives no real proof; and he can give none, for there is not any: his statement can be proved to be the opposite of fact. But he has a reference to two passages of Irenæus. One of them (*On Heresies*, v. 6) has nothing to do with the subject. It is referred to by Middleton for another purpose. And apparently Gibbon, eager to make a show of proofs, has copied the reference, without having so much as looked at the passage! The one passage which bears on the subject (Irenæus, *On Heresies*, ii. 55–57) existed in two forms, both of which are preserved in the original Greek by Eusebius. *It is the only ground that Gibbon has for his assertion* as to the general opinion of Christians. *Irenæus does not say* what Gibbon asserts; and though he had said it, that would not have supported the fabric which Gibbon founds on a mistake.

Irenæus does not say “that the resurrection of the dead was very far from being esteemed an uncommon event.” On the contrary, he shows that, if it ever took place at all, it must have been esteemed a very uncommon event indeed; for he represents the occasion of it as being signalised by an extraordinary solemnity of religious services on the part of the whole Church. And when his statement is closely considered, it becomes doubtful whether he is to be understood as meaning that any such event has ever taken place in his lifetime. He does not say that he has personally witnessed any such event, nor that any such event has been reported to him by or from personal witnesses. Nor does he specify any case in which the event has occurred. He makes a general statement about miracles that have been wrought in connection with Christianity, even raising the dead. And the statement,

though ostensibly referring to his own time, may really be but a repetition of statements which Christians were in the habit of making with reference to the miracles of the first century, perhaps not always duly mindful of the date of the events, but laying emphasis only on the fact of them.

Papias, for instance, whom Dr. Salmon places at A.D. 125, and who perhaps was a pupil of the Apostle John, is found apparently speaking as if there had been a case of resurrection, *in his own lifetime* (νεκροῦ γὰρ ἀνάστασιν κατ' αὐτὸν γεγονέναι, Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 19). But he is represented as speaking conditionally about what he had heard from the daughters of Philip the evangelist. And a fair construction of the matter is, that what he spoke of was the miracle performed by Paul, a few weeks before Philip's daughters conversed with the apostle at Cæsarea, in the restoration of Eutychus (Acts xx. 9–12). It would be natural for Papias to question them about their meeting with the great apostle, and this miracle might be very vividly in the recollection of the meeting. The expression (κατ' αὐτὸν) about his *own time*, thus falls to mean, within the memory of those he had conversed with.

A little after Papias, say about A.D. 130, there were published the two earliest Apologies heard of in Church history, by the Athenian philosophers Aristides and Quadratus to the Emperor Adrian. He may never have read nor seen them; but Irenæus, we may presume, must have read them with keen interest. And a fragment of Quadratus which has come down to us is important, not only in itself, but (for us at this point) especially because it may have led Irenæus into that manner of speaking which led Gibbon to erect an inverted pyramid of history on a foundation of really nothing. Quadratus reasoned that the miracles of Christ were important, because the work remained as a witness to the worker. And he instances the fact, that some of those on whom the Lord had performed miracles had remained alive a considerable time (ἐπὶ χρόνον ἱκανόν), so as even to have survived "*until our own times*" (ὥς τε καὶ εἰς τοὺς ἡμετέρους χρόνους ἀφίκοντο). If Quadratus in A.D. 130 was an aged man, he may with his own eyes have seen some—*e.g.* the son of the widow of Nain—on whom Christ had performed miracles a hundred years

before. But there is here no call for that rigour of construction. The general expression "down to our own times" does not necessarily mean anything more definite than "down into this post-apostolic age of ours," or "down to within the knowledge of persons whom we have known." And so regarded, the statement is seen to be in no wise unlikely.

It is to be observed that these writers, before the middle of the second century, *threw miracle back into the past*. So far from speaking as if miracle were common in their own day, they refer to it only as a thing of the *long-remembered* past,—a past which in both cases is earlier than the close of the apostolic age. Irenæus wrote some fifty years after them, in the last quarter of the second century. And there is nothing in Church history to countenance the suggestion, that in the half century between them and him there had sprung up among Christians a belief that such miracles as raising the dead was then a far from "uncommon event." There is no evidence of any one Christian having believed in any one case of raising the dead in all those fifty years. A miracle so stupendous, if granted to the Church, would have been heard of all through her borders, and all through the Roman world, down through the century to its close. It never was heard of, unless it be in that one passage of Irenæus, which does not bear the construction which Gibbon puts upon it—if he saw it.

In one of the forms of the passage (ii. 57) he speaks of the dead who were raised up as having "remained among us a considerable number of years" (*παρέμειναν σὺν ἡμῖν ἱκανοῖς ἔτεσι*). This reminds us of the expression of Quadratus (*ἐπὶ χρόνον ἱκανόν*), "a considerable period of time." If Irenæus read the statement fifty years ago, it may then have taken possession of his mind; so that now he may be repeating the tenor of it, though he should long have forgotten how it came into his mind at first. His expression, they remained "*with us*," does not necessarily mean that those dead-alive have been contemporaries of Irenæus personally. On the contrary, the verb which he employs, the Greek *aorist*, puts their "remaining" *back into the past*; not "they *have* remained," but "they *did* remain." And the "with us" correspondingly means not Irenæus personally, but *the Christian community*, whose

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cause he is pleading against heathens and heretics, and with whom he as an advocate identifies himself. This is a common way of speaking. An American may say to an Englishman, "We beat you in the revolutionary war; and Lafayette and other Frenchmen fought on our side a considerable number of months."

The mere element of strict time does not enter into the substance of the argument of Irenæus. Reasoning for Christianity, on the ground of its *beneficent* miracles, as compared with the *useless* or *mischievous* wonders of heathenism or heresy, he, so to speak, *personates the whole movement of Christianity* in the world. In relation to that whole complex historical fact, beneficent miracle is important; and peculiarly so is raising the dead, especially as made unmistakable by their afterwards remaining alive for some considerable time among the brotherhood. *When*, precisely, that took place, is not relevant to the force of the argument. A younger member of the family is speaking of a well-known fact in the family history. The date is of no consequence, the important thing is the fact.

Thus putting the occurrence *back into the past*, Irenæus shows that raising the dead *in his day* was not by any means regarded as a "not uncommon event." On the contrary, his manner of speaking implies that in his day no such thing was really expected by Christians. His peroration has a somewhat pompous description of the solemn ceremonial, of prayers and thanksgivings, that would signalise the great event. But he does not connect that with any specific place or time. Apparently he only indulges in a flight of Oriental rhetoric, in description of what *would be* an appropriate manner of signalising an event so wonderful (a manner curiously contrasted with the sublimely simple manner of the actual performance of this miracle in the work of Christ and the apostles). *Conclusion*:—As to the second century, the belief in such performance, *in the time of the witnesses*, is conspicuous by absence. The silence of Tertullian and Origen about the matter is itself extremely significant. And though Irenæus had said, what he does say, that the Christians of his time believed in the occurrence of that miracle there and then, his isolated utterance would have fallen to be dis-

regarded, as manifestly contrary to evidence of history regarding the true state of opinion at the time.

The moral here is further pointed by a reference to Theophilus of Antioch, in which Gibbon, still intending murder, again falls into suicide. Of that apologist he speaks as acting otherwise than was to be expected of a Christian teacher, in declining to work a miracle of raising the dead when challenged by "a noble Grecian" to give that sample of evidence of Christianity. From the words of Theophilus (*Ad Autolyicum*, Bk. i.) it is clear that he regarded the challenge as foolish, in its assumption that if the dead were once raised in proof of this religion, they ought now to be raised in renewed proof for the satisfaction of a "noble Grecian" (as if, because the sun has risen in the morning, he ought to be ready to rise whenever that is desired by a superior person—who wants to make sure—in the course of the day). The answer plainly was intended as meaning, not that Theophilus declined a reasonable challenge, but that he regarded the reasoning of the challenger as silly. It is Theophilus (in the work referred to) who, in answer to the challenge, "Show me thy God," said, "Show me *thy man*, and I will show thee my God."

A British "scientist" challenges Christians to produce answers to prayer in such a manner as obliquely to experiment on his behalf upon God (cp. Matt. xii. 40). The disregard of that stupid indecency by the challenged only showed that Christians of the nineteenth century do not regard the Supreme Being as a help to them for exhibition of wonders at call, like the "moonist" in Artemus Ward's show; and that they do not regard answers to prayer, for gratification of "scientific" scepticism, as not uncommon occurrences producible at their pleasure. In the face of that notorious event, and of well-known facts in the general history of the time, it is to be hoped that Macaulay's New Zealander shall not represent a contrary belief as having been generally prevalent among the Christians of our nineteenth century, even though that future Gibbon should manage to find some one statement, of one bishop, which can be *misunderstood* as meaning some such thing.

4. *Healing and exorcism.* Among Christians of the second

century there unquestionably was a belief in miracles of this description. A distinct consideration of that subject at the present stage may help toward comprehension, both of the substantive nature of Christianity, and of the office of miracle as evidence of its truth. We will therefore pause for distinct consideration of it.

EXCURSION 1: *On second-century belief in ecclesiastical miracles.*

The belief of the second-century Christians, that miracles of exorcism and healing were wrought among them, may have been mistaken; as the Christians of the fifteenth century may have been mistaken in their belief that bread and wine were changed into flesh and blood.

The belief does not appear in the apostolic Fathers. From the close of the apostolic age down to near the close of the second century, the belief appears to have been absent from the mind of the Church. It does not distinctly appear until we come to Irenæus and Tertullian, in the third generation after the apostles. In Origen, at the middle of the following century, it appears with more impressiveness, because he is ordinarily a very trustworthy witness as to matters of fact, and because he speaks of this matter with more of the appearance of having carefully considered it than is exhibited by his predecessors.

We must dismiss from our minds the impression that even these Fathers gave a great place to those ecclesiastical miracles. The great amount of discussion that the matter has received is apt to create the impression that it must have greatly occupied the mind of Christians in the primitive time. The fact is, that all that is said about it in the Christian Fathers of that time could be printed on one page. And the place which they assign to this kind of miracle is subordinate and subsidiary; the grand primary evidence of miracle being constituted, according to their view, by the wondrous works of Christ and His apostles.

The statement of Irenæus regarding raising the dead shows that his judgment in this case is not weighty. And Tertullian is more unfortunate. One of his miracles was one of thunder and rainstorm, sent for victory to the Roman

army in answer to the prayers of Christians, whose legion was consequently called "The Thundering." But, 1. That legion was called "The Thundering" before Christianity was heard of in the world; 2. Though the storm had been sent in answer to praying soldiers, that would not have made a miracle, any more than rain does when sent in answer to praying farmers; and 3. Marcus Aurelius, the commander on that occasion, does not appear to have thought he was in any way indebted to Christians for the relief to his army, for he soon after authorised or ordered the savage persecution of Lyons and Vienne. Another of Tertullian's miracles was one of healing on the Emperor Septimus Severus, in answer to prayer of Christians, with application of oil. But, 1. Here, too, there is no authentication of the fact; 2. The work might have been no miracle, but an ordinary work of healing in answer to prayer, according to the prescription in Jas. v. 14; and, 3. Severus, too, showed no appreciation of benefit; witness the fact that under him there was a "great" persecution in North Africa, in the light of whose flames the apologetic works of Tertullian were written. These two Fathers, knowing the central fact of miraculous proof of Christianity, evidently were not careful in investigating details. Origen has not exposed himself to this censure; but we shall see that his evidence is inconclusive.

Taking Origen as in this relation the one where judgment is weighty, we find that the Christian belief as to miracles in that period stood thus:—1. The substantive miraculous evidence of Christianity is constituted by the mighty works of the apostles and of Christ. 2. The miracles of the second century are not to be compared with these, much less placed on a level with them. They are only as the faint remainder of an original force that is dying away, like the continuance of the motion of a boat long after discontinuance of the oarsman's impulsive stroke. And they are to be put forward, not as a substantive proof of Christianity, but rather as a lingering shadow, which may arrest attention, and guide the mind's eye back to the true original proof, in the Gospel miracles and those of the apostles. Correspondingly, the success of the gospel among the heathen is hardly, if at all, to be ascribed to the ecclesiastical miracles even as instrumental cause.

Comparing their belief in those miracles with the Christian belief in miracles which we saw at the middle of the first century, we observe a strong contrast in various essential respects:—1. In the second century we find no one professing to have *himself* worked miracles, as Christ (John xv. 24) and Paul (2 Cor. xii. 12; Rom. xv. 18, 19) professed. 2. In the second century it is not said that in any case the miracle was in attestation of a *public teacher*, showing that he was authorised to speak on behalf of God: the New Testament miracles were *always* the credentials of such a teacher. 3. The second-century miracles were always done vaguely by some one or more of the Christian community: the New Testament miracle never was (the supernatural gifts at Corinth do not come into the comparison here). 4. Above all, the New Testament miracles were for the vitally important purpose of founding the kingdom of God in the world by evidencing the truth of the gospel; but in the second century there was no such purpose to be served; God's kingdom was founded, and the evidence of the miracles of the first age remained for all ages.

As to the question of fact, whether miracles were performed in reality, we observe:—1. In the second century there is no such thing as we have in Paul's Epistles (Gal. iii. 5; 1 Cor. xii.—xiv.), a Christian teacher stating to a Christian community, in a public letter, that *supernatural works are being done among them, now, at this time of his writing*. And 2, and especially, the writers of the second century, excepting those two unfortunate specifications of Tertullian, *in no case give the particulars* of a miracle, specifying place, time, persons, and generally circumstances of identification, such as would constitute means of verification or exposure, like the circumstantial narratives of miracle in the Gospels and the Acts.

The following are the passages of Origen: *Contra Celsum* (ed. Spencer). With reference to the dove-like descending of the Holy Ghost on Christ, he says, Bk. i. pp. 34, 35:—I will avail myself not only of them, but also and reasonably of those which the apostles of Jesus performed. For not without mighty works and wonders could they have succeeded in moving the hearers of their novel reasonings and teachings to

abandon their ancestral religions (τὰ πάτρια) and incur perils of death in embracing the teachings of these men. And among Christians there *still are retained* (σώζονται) *traces* (ἵχνη) of that Holy Spirit which was seen in the likeness of a dove. *They expel demons, and effect many healings, and have some visions* (ὀρῶσι τινά), according to the will of the Word (λόγῳ), *concerning the future* (περὶ μελλόντων). Though Celsus, or the Jew whom he personates, should mock at what I am about to say, yet I will say, that many have come over to Christianity as if against their will, under the inward power of a spirit moving them (τὸ ἡγηνουμένον,—the Spirit) suddenly, from hating the word to dying on behalf of it,—a vision or dream (being the nature of what moves them so).

He goes on to say that if he were to write the things of the kind which are known to him personally, from the evidence of his own eyes, his statement would be deemed incredible and ridiculous. And he calls God to witness the conscientious sincerity of his purpose to establish the doctrine of Jesus, not by means of lying stories, but (by truthful account of) a certain varied energy (where his *energeia*, as in Eph. i. 19, iii. 7, iv. 16, is a transcendental reality of operation). He plainly speaks of real supernatural working; but he gives us no details to enable *us* to judge; and no apostle thought that *his* miracles would be deemed absurd or incredible.

In another place (Bk. ii. p. 62) he says, that when Jesus came, the supernatural had completely ceased to evince its presence by “signs”—prophecies, miracles—among the Jews. But as to the Christians of his own day, he says:—

Yet of these (supernatural manifestations) after so long a time, there can be found *traces* (ἵχνη) among Christians, some of them not inconsiderable. And, if I am to be believed, I myself have seen them.

Still, he does not give *us* the means of judging. In another place (Bk. vii. p. 337) he expresses precisely the view which we have represented by the image of a boat’s momentum becoming spent.

Signs of the Holy Ghost were exhibited at the beginning of the teaching of Jesus, but after His ascension more copiously (πλείονα), and later more sparsely. But even now there still are *traces* (ἵχνη) of it among a few (παρ’ ὀλίγους), whose souls are

purified by the word, and by a practice of life corresponding to the word.

The sudden overwhelming effect upon the mind of heathens is not conclusive as to miracle: the same kind of thing is to be seen at revival meetings, perhaps not in such high degree. Beyond that there is no specification. And before considering more closely the somewhat vague allegation of the general statements of the witnesses which have reached us, we observe the rising of a cloud of Ecclesiasticism (Taylor, *Ancient Christianity*) which may have begun to obscure the judgment of Christian witnesses, as it will by and by darken the whole Christian life of the world. We have observed that the alleged miracles are not attached as "seals" to the teaching of a responsible representative individual, but are vaguely made to be in the Christian community. We now mark the fact, that there is beginning to form a corporation, calling itself "the Church," which will end in "Churchianity" instead of Christianity; and will draw *miracle* and other things into the service of an Ecclesiasticism, which puts an official priesthood between the sinful soul and God, where Christianity places only Christ, the great High Priest passed into the heavens. A vague *thaumaturgy* in a "tremendous mystery" of sacraments, will harden into the *opus operatum* of the *hoc est corpus*—which John Bull made *hocus-pocus*—miracle of transubstantiation. This makes continuance of miracle into an article of faith. When a *regime* of miracle is thus constituted, other miracles are easily credited; and they are *in demand* for support of the ecclesiastical system. Origen, and those who went before him on this path, were thinking only of corroboration of the primary substantive miraculous evidence of the Gospels and the Apostolic Age. In effect, they were leading the Church on to a slippery incline in the direction of losing sight of the "one mediator between God and man," and landing in a Christianity which without Him is a ceremonialism disguising paganism or mere deism.

The tendency of ecclesiastical miracle is injurious to Christian evidence in two ways. 1. It destroys the *uniqueness* of the original miracles. Christ Himself is lost when He ceases to be unique, alone in His glory, as the sun in the firmament, the priesthood of Melchisedek, the being of God. So the

evidence of the Bible miracles is eclipsed when *they* are not unique. To make them common, by having successors to them in every age, is so far to destroy them in their evidential quality of wonder, extraordinariness, solitariness in history of the world. And so, 2, multiplication of miracles tends to lower their quality by making *questionable* the *reality* of them. A crowd of questionable miracles has not the effect of a few that are unquestionable. It only puts confused thunders into the place of lightning-balls; or a shouting mob in the place of trained, skilful marksmen. Christianity brings the sun, moon, and stars down to earth. Churchianity tramples them into the dust by vulgarising the conception of miracle, so as to make the thing incredible to rational mind of men. The pious Christian may think he is strengthening the Christian evidence by multiplying miracles; but really, though there should be no "pious fraud," the tendency of the multiplication is to multiply that evidence into nothing. For the mere multiplication of a thing where nature forbids multitude, is inevitably suggestive of "lying wonders."

"Lying" wonders (see on "Lying wonders," etc., further on) are not necessarily unreal. A "lying wonder" is one that *lies*; that misleads by deceiving. And for the purpose of deceiving there may be reality. It is to all appearance about real miracles, though misleading, that we read in the history of opposition to Jehovah's cause in Egypt. There is no suggestion of unreality in the predictions of lying wonders which were delivered by Christ (Matt. xxiv. 24), by Paul (2 Thess. ii. 10), and by John (Rev. xiii. 14, 15), respectively with reference to false Christs, to the Man of sin, to the second Beast. It appears a strange thing that those early Fathers should have easily accepted a kind of work, post-apostolic miracle, of which the scriptural premonitions are so ominous. It might seem as if already they were being drawn into the fatal fascination of "deceit."

It is noteworthy that the Christian *people* of the second century appear to have been less easily carried away than their teachers. At least it is clear that the people had no thought of miracle being performed *for them* when they had sorest need of it. They knew that by miracle Peter and Paul had been delivered from prison, and Daniel and the three

children had been delivered from death. And now Christ was risen, with all power given to Him in heaven and on earth. And they had the direst need of such deliverance. But they do not appear to have even so much as thought of it. The Lyonnese confessors entreated the brethren to pray for them, not that they might be delivered from death, but that they might be enabled to glorify God by the manner of their dying. It is true that the account of Polycarp's martyrdom, florid oriental, speaks of something wonderful about his death: the flame arching round him, as if shrinking from violation of the sacredness of his person. But it burned him to death. And it is striking that, in all that time of fiery trials, the sufferers, "not accepting deliverance," appear never to have imagined that God would help His own children by a miracle. The miracles of mercy were, so far as we can learn from the general indications, done upon the persons of heathens especially; and in Tertullian we find a low and bitter cry of reproach to the heathen on account of their ingratitude in persecuting the Christians notwithstanding those benefits. Here again, therefore, it appears that among the Christians, even of the later period of the century, when belief in one class of miracles begins to appear, the belief did not amount to any real expectation of supernatural help to *Christians* in their times of need, nor to dependence upon evidence of that miracle for success of the gospel. Those who reflected might thus find a difficulty in the question, What is this miracle-working power *for*?

The question, *What* is it for, is closely connected with the question, *Whom* is it for? And this, *Cui bono?* is of especial importance in the testing of miracles. The Bible miracles are made to be manifestly dependent on the sovereign *will* of God. The "divers miracles of the Holy Ghost," through the apostles, were "*according to His own will*" (Heb. ii. 4). If Paul work miracles (Rom. xv. 18, 19), it is by the Holy Ghost, and it is really Christ that works them through Paul. This makes the miracle to have been, with a manifest directness, the distinctively immediate work of the All-worker Himself, so that—"the finger of God" appearing—it should be seen and felt that the Divine Being is, so to speak, the *personal* performer of this wonder (John xiv. 10; cp. Ex. xv.

11). And it harmonises with the observation as to the intended effect of the Bible miracle,—namely, not a mere *ministerium vagum*, or “roving commission” of mercy, but, distinctly, attestation of a *particular witness* from God, or, accrediting a *particular message* from heaven’s King. This we see even when, on account of some other purpose, the Divinity, so to speak, is veiled in the performance. When it looks as if the poor afflicted woman had *stolen* a miracle of healing to her wasted body, Christ says to her (Matt. ix. 22), “Thy *faith* hath made thee whole;” and (Luke viii. 46) the case is made very remarkable by our being told on this one occasion what took place in the mind of the working God incarnate, “*knowing* that power had gone forth from Him.” In the two seemingly very abnormal cases of miracles of healing wrought through contact with what had touched the *body* of Paul (Acts xix. 12), and, through passing under the *shadow* of Peter (Acts v. 15), still there was the precaution involved in the nature of the circumstances. The miracle was connected, most marked and impressively, with *the person* of an apostle. Miracle was notoriously “the sign of an *apostle*.” And the apostles earnestly disclaimed the arrogation of any power of their own to work miracles at their own discretion, ascribing the work (Acts iii. 6, 12, 16) to the all-powerful “name” of Jesus. It thus was carefully provided that the people should look for the healing benefit to the power only of God in Christ, in the spirit of the leper’s cry, “Lord, *if Thou wilt, Thou* canst make me whole;” so that the result should be, as in the case of her that had the issue of blood, “*thy faith* hath made thee whole,” and not as in the case of those of whom it is written, that “*He could not* work any miracle” among them, but “ *marvelled at their unbelief*” (Mark vi. 5, 6).

Now compare this with the ecclesiastical miracles. In the second century, when they begin to be spoken of, they are not connected with any particular teacher, nor with any particular message, as if with an ambassador who comes bearing a definite instruction from the king, but vaguely, with the Christians, the community of professed believers. And from that time onward they became more and more exclusively attached, “thirled,” to the corporation which called

itself "the Church," the human priesthood which, with its *opus operatum*, directed the sinful soul to itself instead of to the one Mediator between God and man. The wonders ascribed to "relics" of dead "saints" are a dismal parody on the miracles of contact with the persons of apostles and of Christ. The miracle-working power, instead of being manifestly that of the Holy Ghost (Acts i. 8; cp. viii. 18), exercising in every case a sovereign freedom in a distinct act of *the will of God*, sinks into a *fund* of power, to be drawn upon at the discretion of that corporation of ecclesiasticism calling itself "the Church." And this degradation of the evidence is in support of an apostasy from the religion in the substance of it;—an apostasy which characteristically, retaining the name of Christ, puts *the power* into the hands of "the Church," making salvation to be a "treasury," disposable at the discretion of her official priesthood, instead of flowing freely, to "whosoever will" (Rev. xxii. 17), from the sovereign will of God in Christ.

The "lying wonders" of that wicked one, "whose coming is after the power of Satan" (2 Thess. ii. 7–12), were to be "with all *deceivableness* of unrighteousness in them that perish." The second Beast (Rev. xiii. 14, 15) was to *deceive* the dwellers on the earth with his great wonders. And (Matt. xxiv. 24) the false prophets and false Christs were, if that had been possible, to *deceive* the very elect. *Deception* was thus to be a widespread effect of the false miracle; which might be real, as a supernatural work, though false, as a misleading Satanic, in imitation (cp. Ex. vii. 11) of true miracles of God. While, therefore, we receive the *testimony* of the second-century witnesses as to matters of fact within their knowledge, we are bound to exercise our own *judgment* as to the reality and truth of the miracles alleged by them.

The only thing like miracles distinctly alleged by them are the works of healing and of casting out devils. The statement of Irenæus about raising the dead leaves clear the fact that there was no pretension to actual working of this miracle on behalf of Christianity in that century. And Origen's expression about some who had some "visions" is too vague and elastic for use in the precise question regarding miraculous attestation of the religion. *As to the works of*

healing and exorcism, there can be no real doubt that *they were believed in*, as miraculous attestations of the religion, at least by some of the Christians, probably by the generality of them. For otherwise, the apologists we have been hearing would not have spoken of them as they have:—Tertullian, for instance, describing those beneficent wonders, in answer to the prayers of Christians, as notoriously having been wrought upon the heathens he is addressing, whom he bitterly reproaches for their ingratitude in persecuting their benefactors. Further, as we shall see, there need be no doubt *that the works were actually done*:—that is to say, in answer to the prayer of Christians, men were delivered from disease, and from what was believed to be the power of evil demons. We will suppose the reality of those works as unquestionable. And we will consider the question, supposing the reality of them, were they veritable *miracles*, extraordinary supernatural works in attestation of the religion?

We need not complicate the question by introducing into it the distinction, among *real* miracles, between true miracle and false miracle, or “lying wonder.” For at that early period the “mystery of iniquity” had not become so far unfolded in its working, that the alleged miracles were turned to the support of a usurping priesthood with a religion of paganism or deism, baptized but not regenerate. They were in sincere good faith appealed to on behalf of the gospel of God’s grace, through Jesus Christ the only Mediator. We will therefore assume that the miracles, if real, were true. And so we will restrict our inquiry to the point of the *reality* of those alleged miracles:—Were those works, of healing and of so-called exorcism, really and properly miraculous,—extraordinary supernatural attestations of the gospel? The following reasons appear to show that they were not:—

1. *The works themselves are not visibly extraordinary*, in the strict sense of miracle, as involving an operation that has not place in the ordinary providence of God. Turning water into wine, feeding thousands with a few loaves, walking on the sea, raising the dead, are things unmistakably extraordinary, such that there is no possibility of doubting that they are either miracles or impostures. It is not so with the

alleged miracles of the second century. They may have taken place in answer to believing prayer, so as to promote the success of the gospel by the power of God in ordinary providence, gracious in its goodness. This may have been so, though the Christians and heathens alike should have regarded the works as truly miraculous. For they were not infallible judges of the question whether a work was miraculous or not. And relatively to that question their fallible judgment was apt to be led astray, into too easily believing in miracle because they were familiar with the thought of heathen miracles, whose reality they believed in; and the assertion of Christian miracle was a short and easy method of argument with the heathen on behalf of Christianity. Let us consider the two kinds of work distinctly (see further in Bk. ii.):—

(1.) *Healing the sick* is not a visibly extraordinary work. Apart from the science of medicine, there is a natural gift of healing in men; such that it is wholesome for a man to be in the fellowship of mankind. And in some it may exist in very high degree, such that the effect of it may well appear miraculous—to those who are looking for miracle; especially if there have been an appeal to God for His power in the work. An eminent Christian minister bears witness (to the present writer within this past year) that he saw his grandmother successfully wrestling, the sweat running down her brow, to bring back a neighbour from the gates of death. She made no pretence of miracle. She was a believing Christian, with a great skill in simples, and a great natural gift of healing; and she wrestled with God for the blessing of that languishing life's returning, through her use of natural means.

We are not always qualified to judge how far the operation of such a natural gift may extend in this or that case. That may depend upon conditions that are unknown to us, either in the patient or in the operator. A little more than two years ago, the present writer saw a man apparently languishing out of life, despaired of by himself and others, in a malady which the neighbours called St. Vitus' dance. For two years that man has been in good health, habitually engaged in heavy labour. A captain of the Salvation Army engaged

with him in prayer for his recovery; and within a few minutes he appeared at a revival meeting, like the one who had been helpless at the beautiful gate of the temple, "praising God." The simple people called that a miracle, in sincere good faith. But they did not know. How could they? Similar works of healing are done for money by those who have the healing gift, but may not have the gospel grace of "freely." And without any intervention of religion, the life that is in a man, so long as he breathes, has in it powers of rallying beyond our calculation, which may suddenly throw off all weakness, as if mortality had been so far swallowed up of life. A captain of a fire brigade, whom the present writer had seen unable to move upon his bed with a painful acute disease, was made agile as a panther, and oblivious of all weakness, by hearing the fire-bell sound alarm. And history shows De Lacy Evans transformed from a helpless invalid in his tent into the erst fiery soldier of the Spanish war, by the tidings of a battle raging on the dusky slopes of Inkermann.

The power of sympathetic influence, in the healing operation of that natural gift, is known to be somewhat in the measure of expectant longing in the sufferer, and of resolute purposing enthusiasm in the worker. Enthusiasm of humanity was at its highest in the Christians of the primitive Church. More perhaps than in any other community that ever lived, there was working in them a passionate longing to do good unto all men. They had also in them an exulting joyful confidence of success, in the assurance that the Lord was with them, who had expressly pledged His omnipotence in His prescription of the prayer of faith for the healing of the sick. A company of those Christians, with all their soul of faith and love centred on one suffering fellow-man, might lay hold of his very soul as in an ocean of strong sympathy, and bear up his restored body as if on angel's wings. We may fully believe that in that age of ardent fresh beginning of a new life to mankind, there were great and manifold works of healing, such as the world has never seen before nor since. But whether all this may not have been, like the continuance of health by God's power in answer to prayer for His blessing on our daily bread, a work of ordinary gracious providence,

the primitive Christians did not know and could not know. For there was nothing in the nature of the work itself *necessitating* the conclusion that it was properly and strictly an "extraordinary" work of Providence.

(2.) As to *exorcism*. The Christians believed that men through sin have been in large measure made subject to the power of evil demons possessing them; that the gods of the heathen were such demons; and that such possessing demons were expelled by the Christians, calling on the name of God in Christ. We need have no doubt that in fact there were, through the instrumentality of Christians in their lively exercise of faith, many cases of deliverance, which not only the Christians, but the heathens as well as the Jews, believed to be cases of real expulsion of a demon. But again, as to the actual nature of the work, they all may have been mistaken. The deliverance may have been real, but not miraculous.

First, let us suppose that there was a real demoniacal possession. Then we need not be staggered by finding the demon which on one occasion is expelled confessing that he is Saturn. For though Saturn should never have existed, this demon, whose veracity is not a matter of course, may falsely pretend to be that ancient god of Latium. But the expulsion of any heathen deity may not be a miracle, any more than there is miracle in the expulsion of a disturber from a prayer-meeting by rebuke. "This kind goeth not out but by fasting and prayer." But the fasting and prayer may be efficacious in this case, as the prayer of faith and anointing of oil in the case of healing the body. More especially because *the great work* of "destroying the works of the devil," "destroying him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil," was "finished" in the first century. The kingdom of darkness was broken in its central strength by the redemptive work of Christ. After He had overcome in the main battle, the broken fugitive forces of the dark kingdom have been chased from covert after covert round the world, in the new-creative work of the Spirit through apostles and evangelists. And now it is only a confusedly scattered *débris* of power discomfited that is represented by the heathen religions and their gods. How can we know—how could the primitive

Christians know—that, for the expulsion of a demon, there was need of a power of God specifically different from that which He puts forth, in varying measures of degree, in His ordinary works of providence or of grace? But,

Second, here there is a previous question, in which the primitive Christians were by no means infallible judges,—the question, namely, whether the demoniacs were in reality possessed by evil demons. The mere confession, which came out of the afflicted persons themselves, is not conclusive. In cases of lycanthropy, a madman thinks he is a wolf. Persons were burned for witchcraft, upon their own sincere confession of “black arts,” who in reality were not witches any more than those who condemned them, after having terrified them out of their wits, were wizards. A man of shattered mind, full of heathen superstition, might believe himself possessed, and “*simulate*” the dual personality implied in demoniacal possession, though there had never been such a thing as real demoniacal possession in the world. Even medical experts might be deceived in such a case.

Here again there is no call to question the substantive reality of the deliverance. The healing of the body, in functional disease, was so far of the same nature with this deliverance, that in both cases there was the operation of mind upon mind. But in the case of the deliverance the operation was almost, if not quite, exclusively mental. And the only mind that could be directly *known*, by the Christians or the heathens, as actively or passively in the operation, was that of man. Whether the disturbing power, in fatal possession and ruinous command of the manhood, was that of a personal demon or only that of disease, those Christians and heathens could not know otherwise than we can. But they were liable to be misled by a habit, from which we are free, of ascribing all disorders of the mind indiscriminately to operation of personal demons, in alien possession of both mind and body. And they were not, as we are, habituated to recognise the existence of a *disease* of the mind, which has many of the effects that might result from possession by a demon. While, therefore, we accept their *testimony* as to the fact of deliverance, we do not bow to their *judgment* as to the nature of the affliction.

The disease of *amentia* is well known to be amenable to healing influence of the sane. Especially, it is known that in this case "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." The phrenetic mind is appeased: the spirit of depression is revived. The healing influence is peculiarly powerful where the unhinging was occasioned by nerval disorder, and where there now enters the peace of God to keep the heart and the mind in Christ Jesus. In this respect the kingdom of God, with its righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, must have been a blessing truly immense to the heathen world it entered. Whether there were or were not a personal possession by demons, there was in heathendom a vast amount of the misery of distraction far worse than that of the dualism in Rom. vii.—like that of her out of whom Christ cast seven devils. On the background of the early Christian history, and of the preceding history of mankind, we perceive a profoundly unhappy race of mankind, a world that lieth "in the wicked one," or "in wickedness,"—the effect of miserable distraction is the same. And the gospel was medicine to that mind diseased. It plucked from memory the rooted sorrow. The wondering joy of the deliverance rightly ascribed this freedom to the supernatural grace of God. But the *judgment*, that the work was in the relevant sense miraculous, was "not according to the evidence."

2. *Miracle is not called for* in the circumstances, but rather excluded by them. The poet's rule, *Nec deus intersit nisi dignus vindice nodus intererit*, is not applicable for the exclusion of supernaturalism from the Christian history according to the nature of Christianity. According to the nature of this religion, the history of it is all supernatural, God in Christ making all things new, filling all in all, working all in all. But by the religion itself, the miraculous, *extraordinary* supernatural is not placed in all the history, but is restricted in the history to that place, or those places, where miracle is really called for.

Miracle was called for in Egypt, where Israel had to be delivered from the strong house of its bondage, and a proof had to be given once for all that Jehovah, Israel's God and Saviour, is the only God living and true. And it was called for in the fulness of the times, when the world had to be

redeemed from the tyranny of evil, and a proof had to be given once for all of the glory of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. But just on that account, in the following ages miracles are not called for, since their work is already done; but they are excluded, because the tendency of their coming out of place and time would be to injure the work already done, marring the effect of those miracles by undoing their uniqueness. If the sun and moon stand still one day, then, for all following time, in order to manifestation of the glory of Jehovah, what is required is, not that now and again the sun should be standing still (at the bidding of a priest or other creature), but that the grand horology of nature should continue evermore in a movement all unbroken, so as to make memorable for ever that one day, of the battle of the Lord, when time stood waiting for the "short work" of the Eternal on the earth.

Thus, as to those works of Christ, such as healing and exorcism, which, if they had been alone, would not have been plainly miraculous, they are plainly miraculous because they are *not* alone. They are in the train of such works as raising the dead, giving sight to the born blind, walking on the sea, feeding thousands with a few loaves, turning water into wine. They thus are, in a day of miraculous working, a *regime* of extraordinary supernatural; and they take their quality from those greater works which constitute the order of the day. They are done by Christ Himself, and by His ambassadors, not as exhibitions of a natural gift of healing, nor as coming in place of the trained skill of the physician, but a God-given evidence of the mission of this messenger, the truth of His message of healing to mankind. They are no mere demonstrations of zealous piety, of unauthorised skirmishes in pursuit of broken fugitives; they are an essential part of the main central battle of the redemption of mankind, of deliverance of the world from the tyranny of evil. Works of mercy, for the healing of the body and the restoration of the soul, are to be in all ages, through the rising of that "Sun of righteousness, with healing in His wings." But *miracles* in a following age can serve no purpose but to distract men's attention from the uniqueness of the sunrise, or from the sultriness of the day in which the sun and moon stood still.

The plan of Christianity, as given in Scripture, is in this relation very significant. Moses was *instructed* to work miracles in Egypt. Christ acted under *instructions* of the Old Testament in working the miracles of the gospel history. And the apostles, in working miracles, even raising the dead, acted upon His *instructions* (Matt. x. 8) from the very beginning of their first probationary mission during His life. Correspondingly, we find that their miracles were done in a real sense by Christ Himself (Rom. xv. 18), or, by distinct personal free agency of the Holy Ghost (Heb. ii. 4). There thus was provision for a miraculous *founding* of Christendom in the world. But there is no such provision for continuance of miracle in a Church that once is founded. On the contrary, there is a very striking absence of miracle from the view which the Scriptures give us of the life of the Church under care of the apostles. Thus, in that *view of Christianity*, so full of the experience of Christians in their life of faith, how much is said about miracle? *Not one syllable*. In the twenty-one Epistles there are fourteen in which there is not so much as one allusion to the subject. The four in which allusion is made to it with most emphasis show that there was call for the allusion in some exceptional or special condition of the communities there addressed. Evidently the Bible plan of Christianity has no place for miracle after the Church is founded in the apostolic age.

Yet, in the Bible view of the future, there are to be miracles, "great miracles," of power, and signs and wonders." And they are to be done in connection with Christianity. But they are to be done by the second Beast, the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition, as by false prophets and false Christs. They are to be Satanic, with a deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, such that, if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect. *These* "ecclesiastical" miracles were predicted by John, and Paul, and Christ. They are the only ecclesiastical miracles of which we have mention in the Scriptures. If, as Gibbon says, the Christian Church has always claimed to be a worker of miracles, then apparently she must always have been labouring to prove herself plainly antichristian.

In bringing to a close this part of our argument, it should be

observed that in the inquiry, negatively, as to what the reliance of the faith was not, we have been carried away from direct contemplation of what the evangelical faith of Christians really *was*. That, however, is by implication the substantive matter of what is in our view throughout this whole inquiry. And now, we will not linger in expiscation of familiar commonplace in the evangelical belief of primitive Christians (represented by the *Apostles' Creed*). But in place of that, we will engage in a short exercise more directly to our present purpose, presupposing the familiar commonplace as known.

EXCURSION 2 : *On the positive import of the "faith."*

In 2 Cor. v. 17, it is contemplated as a spring sunshine, bringing a new life of happy fruitfulness into the place of a gloomy barren winter of spiritual death in sin. The description is one of a class which Paul, at this critical period in his career, employed for illustration of the true inward character of Christianity, as contrasted to a dark and fruitless worldliness, with relapse into which the Churches were threatened by that legalism which was beginning to displace the true faith of the gospel. Thus, another of his descriptions of the faith is (Gal. v. 6) that (not circumcision, nor uncircumcision, but) faith is the thing "which worketh by love." And it is this work of the faith that he has in view in yet a third description (1 Cor. vii. 19,—not circumcision, nor uncircumcision, but)—"keeping the commandments of God."

The genial sunshine may (John i. 5, 11) not be received into the soul, but (2 Cor. iv. 4) may vainly beat upon the worldly heart as on a rock. Or, though the light should in a sense be received into the mind, as the sun is mirrored in a pool, the reflection may be shattered by agitations on the surface, or darkened by pollutions from within or beneath. Or, again, the outward conditions of the Church in the world may be such that for individuals the sun is darkened, as by vapours and storm-clouds rising from the earth. These are images of what no doubt was in operation, tending to mar the new life of Christianity among mankind in the primitive time. But the new life was there. That was the heart of

the movement. As compared with that new life of faith and hope and love (1 Cor. xiii. 1-3), mere miracles of power or wisdom, and even material services extending to the sacrifice of life, but not springing from the spiritual principle of faith, were "nothing."

The new life opens into universalism of affection, and aspiring endeavour through operation of the faith in undoing such distinctions as that of Jew from Gentile, civilised from uncivilised, male from female, bond from free. This inevitably results from the nature of the faith, which has not respect to anything in which one human being differs from another. What it sees in man is, along with the rational constitution which all alike have by creation, a common inheritance of guilt and corruption, which is the condition of the fallen sinful race. Correspondingly, what it sees in God, as coming for a reconciliation to man in Christ Jesus, is, not on His part a regard to what is in one man of superiority to another, but a simply sovereign grace, a redeeming love that is freely bestowed on the chief of sinners, in that blood of Jesus which cleanseth from all sin, on the ground of a perfect thing, the righteousness of God, offered to every sinner for immediate acceptance; with the promise of a new heart and a right spirit, wherewith to serve God as becometh His redeemed. Paul *reasons* out this matter in his four unquestioned Epistles, no doubt with an immediate reference to the state of mind occasioned by the circumcision controversy. Peter does not reason it, but assumes it. He proceeds as if there had never been a question. He speaks as a man who simply sees the thing, which has always been in the faith of God's redeemed, and now is clearly manifested in Jesus Christ.

Thus it may be the Hebrew Christians (1 Pet. i. 1) that now are specially addressed by this Apostle of the Circumcision. But that is of no importance. The essential thing, what he says to them, has nothing to do with Jews and Gentiles. He has to do only with men-sinners saved by grace, walking by faith in God, living to the praise of God the Redeemer, exemplary in the various duties of love and honour due to men. Peter does not say, This is *what was meant* by the old religion. What he says is, This *is* the old religion, the only religion, now shining out clear in Christ as a sun.

Or rather, he does not say it; he *sees* it; it is so clear that there is no need of saying it. There never has been any religion but one—this one, of now the risen Christ. There is and can be only one living God to be revered as a Father, loved with godly fear. There is but one brotherhood of believers, one Israel of God; one love to the brotherhood and reverence for manhood. And any such distinction as that of Jew from Gentile is forgotten, as morning mists are forgotten when the landscape is clearly seen in the sun's cloudless light.

The faith reposes upon *redemption* (1 Pet. i. 9–12, 18–21). It apprehends not simply God, the first cause, the righteous ruler, but Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel, in redeeming grace of Christ through the Spirit. No other thing was ever in this apostle's mind, nor in the mind of the Christians he is addressing. Baur's conception of an original Christianity which made Christ to be only a human reformer, is not only unhistorical, but as a psychological construction perversely jejune. Redemption free for all, in the sovereign love of God, is here the sun, the only light of the new life of mankind. A philosopher like Justin Martyr, coming into the new light, may think that, more or less, what he finds is a brighter light of nature, or a natural light which philosophy had failed to discover for him, or a clear and full comprehension, in *the* truth, of scattered fragments of truth (λόγος σπέρματικός) which were in the world before him. Perhaps it would have been better for Justin (and others) if he had left his philosopher's cloak outside of the school of Christ. But in in his own experience, as in that of others, what *the faith* apprehends is not a speculation of that sort, but "the redemption which is by His blood (the Beloved's), even the remission of sins."

The correlate of redemption is *sin*. And the Petrine view of redemption makes prominent, not simply the loathsomeness of sin as a disease, its impotency as a death, but peculiarly its guilt as a crime. We saw that the early Christians were profoundly under the power of the conception of a *moral government* of God, corresponding to conscience in man (Rom. i. 32; cp. ii. 14, 15). The *criminality* of a sinful man's condition is felt in the measure in which God is apprehended as righteous or holy. And the most powerful representation of the holiness or righteousness of God is that which is

affected through presentation of the cross of Immanuel as a bleeding sacrifice for sin. Peter's vivid presentation of Christ crucified, of the blood of the spotless lamb, peculiarly brings to mind and heart the sinfulness of sin, its criminality, its guilt.

The sense of sin as sinful, along with apprehension of sovereign mercy in redemption from that sinfulness, originates and sustains a feeling not only of dependence, but of penitent *humility*, with an impulse toward sacrifice in the consecration of life as redeemed; and this, under control of a "conscience toward God." Mr. Mill regarded the characteristically Christian feeling of humility as incompatible with magnanimity. If so, then magnanimity is self-conceit; and the heroes are, the Pharisee in the temple, and Marcus in his *Meditations*. However that may be, where the humility comes into human life man is a new creature, and life a radically changed thing.

The main stream of the life of this faith is "the fear of God;" an adoring love which the faith originates and sustains by apprehending the Eternal as a personal Father, who is thrice holy while He pardons and blesses the unclean, and high above all heavens while He dwells among men. Without that godly fear the heart of a true moral life is wanting. And that godly fear has no existence among men excepting where it is created and sustained by the religion of the Bible. A case like that of Socrates, appearing to show a specific difference from mankind as a whole, ought to be considered separately. With reference to mankind as a whole, the historical fact is, that "the fear of God" is wanting from the heart of humanity.

Epicurism, though it should be afraid of ghosts and dabble in atheistic supernaturalism, is in its essence non-moral. A Stoic's feeling of awe toward an impersonal Infinite has in it nothing more than Epicurism has in common with any sort of personal feeling toward a personal God. The Mohammedan devotion to a *characterless* will is not a religion, but a fatalistic metaphysic blended with a worse fanaticism. And the feeling of the peoples towards a personal deity has, where not originated and sustained by the Bible religion, been a specifically different thing from "the fear of God." The character of that feeling is well worth careful consideration, were it only on this account, that it must needs be substan-

tially the character of whatever reality of religious feeling there is in Christian countries, in the heart of those who are not evangelical in their faith. The unbaptized paganism shows us the true nature of that paganism which is disguised by baptism.

The pagan feeling toward a personal deity is represented by a word, *deisidaimonia*, which may almost be historically translated "devil-worship." At the root of it there is (cp. John x. 5) a deep sense of *strangeness*, creating a dread, not unmingled with horror of aversion (*horresco*); but without a particle of that adoring love which is "the fear of God." In the heroic age, when the world is bright and hopeful, Odysseus is a trusty, favourite servant of *Athené*, obtaining many tokens and gifts of her goodwill. But she does not love him as the true God loves His own. He does not love nor trust her as the true Israelite loves and trusts Jehovah, while "trembling at His word." It is doubtful whether any heathen can attach a reality of meaning to the description of Abraham as a "friend" of God, or of disciples as the "friends" of Christ. Where Christianity has the "throne of grace," paganism has, at the heart of it, a vaguely apprehended omnipresence of what pursues the soul with nameless dread, which broke out into "*panic*" terrors. *Pan* was the omnipresence of deity. They caught glimpses of it on occasion, in solitary places of the graves or mountains. And they fled from it, *panic*-stricken, shrieking, perhaps demented, as from the manifested presence of their death. Hence the look of distraction on the face of heathenism, as it appears to view in the rising light of the gospel. The "superstitious" multitudinous forms of worship are *screens* to hide them from the near presence of what they distantly draw toward, as with fascination of that horror. The festivity of heathenism, even in the sunny lands of Hellas, has in it that uneasiness of heart in one who tries to forget what pursues him; like the malefactor striving with night revelry to drown the memory of the morning's execution; or like Coleridge's traveller in the night, who has once looked behind him, and then goes swiftly on

" And turns no more his head :
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread."

Unless there be simply irreligion, insensibility toward the Supreme Being, there is that nameless terror in the heart of every man to whom the gospel does not bring the peace of God. But it is a righteous peace of a God who is "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders." It therefore creates a life, not of mere sentimental happiness, but that is profoundly moral, in "the fear of God." That feeling is the ground tone of apostolic Christianity; and unquestionably, where it enters into possession of human society, there is a new life of the world, rooted in morality, fruitful in happiness.

The heathen world, being without God, is without man; the world by wisdom knew not man. The unjust judge, not fearing his Maker, regards not his fellow. The second Commandment is like the first. Love to one's neighbour is a stream from the same fountain as love to the Creator and Redeemer. And the "*fear of God*" has corresponding to it "*honour all men.*" Peter lays great stress on this reverence due to manhood, by not only delivering the precept in its general form, and ringing changes upon it, from (1 Pet. ii. 17) the emperor on the throne to the wife in the house (iii. 7); but especially by the light in which he shows those of lowest position,—the woman, the slave, the subject. In the new true light of redemption we see in them restoration of nature. In the lowest position manhood is crowned—though the crown be thorny—through suffering service of God. The glory of Immanuel's crucifixion is most brightly reflected in the down-trodden bondsman. The brother of low degree is thus exalted, not *from* the degree, but *in* it. The position is nothing but an occasion for the manhood. And here, in the lowest and worst position, we all the more clearly see, as *the* thing to be honoured, the manhood redeemed—

" My kind, now vested with the eternal glory
Of God made flesh, glorious to me became.
Henceforth those crowns that shine in mortal story,
It seemed a grief to wear, madness to claim.
To be a man, seemed now man's noblest aim :—
His noblest task, to serve one, even the least,
Of those who fight God's fight, and share His kingly feast."

—Sir Aubrey de Vere.

Augustine gave offence by speaking of the virtuous actions of the heathens as only "shining sins" (*splendida peccata*).

But let us try the heathen life by the one test of a real regard, of affectionate respect, for that *manhood* which is alike in every human being; and its highest morality is seen to be only a whited sepulchre of plausible immorality. The heathen heart is not represented by *Homo sum, nihil humani alienum a me puto*. That was the utterance of a slave (Terence). It is said that the first emission of it (theatrically) took the Roman citizenship by storm, as if with bewildering amazement. It is notorious that the kindred Christian profession of brotherly love was incomprehensible to "civilised" heathens, except upon the view that it was a cloak for abominations that sully humanity. Honour to manhood was dead and gone from the heart of that world. The great redemptive work of replacing this lost affection in the heart of the world's life has already begun to show itself as resulting from the faith of the gospel rightly apprehending man in his relation to the living God. Further illustration will appear when we come to consideration of the Christian life in its details. Meantime one or two may be noted.

The slave was not honoured. To the freeman he was not a "brother of low degree," but a troublesome though useful *thing*. A historian so grave and so little credulous as Thucydides records the tradition, that anciently the Spartans, when the slave population threatened to become unmanageably numerous, thinned it by killing off a sufficient number, as if keeping down a breed of vermin. In settled communities the slaves, through various processes, even tended to be an augmenting proportion of the whole population. In "free" Athens, according to the lowest estimate we recall to mind, there were three bondsmen for two freemen. In the Roman empire, it reckoned, the numbers of bond and free were about equal. The position in towns and cities was one of social degradation, such as we see in the classical comedy, with unlimited possibility of misery through tyranny of owners. In Italy, the old manhood of citizen small farmers in rural districts gave place to gangs of field slaves on great estates; estates which thus, according to the elder Pliny, were the ruin of the country,—*Latifundia perdiderunt Italiam*. The desperate unhappiness of the situation was not only for the slaves, but also for the owners,—witness the "servile

wars," slave insurrections, deluging the plains of Italy and Sicily with blood. What earthly power could cope with the vast complicated evil of that condition ?

More widely, even the freeman was not loved unless he happened to be of one's own people. The doctrine of a plurality of human races was welcome to a world which professed a principle of natural enmity of nations. Livy brings this to view in an account he gives of a national council of the Greeks. The question was, whether they should or should not go to war with the Romans. And one orator spoke to the effect, that the question was only of expediency, not of principle ; that regarding principle there was no question, seeing that the Romans were "barbarians," and all "barbarians" were natural enemies for Greeks. The Roman word for "enemy"—*hostis*—had originally meant simply "stranger." There was need of a great change. The very heart of society, the family, had profoundest need of new creation, as represented by the injunction to *honour* the wife as the weaker vessel. To those who know and consider what really has been the condition of woman in heathendom, as compared with what is folded in the "honour" ordained to be given to Christian matronhood, perhaps it is in the family that there will appear most vividly the necessity and the reality of a regeneration of mankind by the gospel.

The "regeneration" of which Peter speaks (1 Pet. i. 3, 23) is by *the word*. What he has in view is, the representation which the gospel makes of God and man, as fitted to operate on the *affections* of the believer, producing and sustaining in his heart and life, as a mainspring of working principle, love to God and man ; with the specific qualification of "*fear* God" and "*honour* manhood ;" under authoritative control of conscience, with humility and impulse toward sacrifice. Moral or spiritual goodness, in character and action, can be constituted only by right affections (see Jonathan Edwards' *Religious Affections*). Moral goodness has to be of the heart. And the kind of word that is needed is, not mere definition, but *impulsive* guidance,—to the heart : with *certainty*, "a word of faith," to move the life in its fountain (John iv. 10). All the definitions of all the philosophers are useless—flogging a dead horse—without the heart. There still is needed the

creative word of power, even the revelation of the living God, as the Friend of sinners, the Redeemer of lost men. This, now appearing on Immanuel's cross and in His crown, is what Peter sees in his moralising, upon the key of humble, grateful, hopeful conscientiousness of love, bearing the cross, fearing God, honouring man. And, notwithstanding Hegel and others, this has proved a true beginning of heaven upon earth. *This alone* (sola).

EXCURSION 3: *The labour of love* (the Christian morality, in effect a new creation).

"By their fruits ye shall know them," as a test of the claims of religious system, is especially applicable to the effect of a system on the practical conduct of life. And on behalf of Christianity it is claimed (2 Cor. iii. 18), that it is natively fitted, through its faith as a root, or living foundation, to produce in man a life which, in the essential character of practical morality, is a new creation in a ruined world. This it does by bringing into operation (1 John ii. 7, 8), as if raised from the dead, the operative principle of love, to God Supreme, to a man's neighbour as to himself.

The grand desideratum proclaimed by Socrates was, that philosophy should be brought from the clouds, to work in the real life of men upon the earth. And this the gospel proposes to accomplish, through its faith which "worketh" (in transcendental power, *energeia*, Gal. v. 6; 1 Thess. ii. 13) by love. Love (1 Cor. xiii.) it contemplates as the highest thing in the universe; the foremost of those graces which are superior to all extraordinary supernatural gifts; the only one of those graces destined to immortality: the one which, endowed with the eternal duration of God, is the image of His "nature;" for love is of God, and he that loveth is born of God: he that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." Thus godlike in its nature, it is godlike in its operation; for the distinctively godlike blessedness (Acts xx. 35) is that of giving, not of receiving; and love in man is the only true giver, freely sovereign, seeking not its own. Here, then, is the *datum* for that Socratic desideratum,—the highest thing in the

universe brought into the heart of man, and set in operation through his life.

The Decalogue is a code of moral precepts, directing that love, as a principle of morality, into detailed applications; like those channels through which the fulness of the Nile bears its gifts of beauty and wealth to all the land. As a declaration of human duty, the Ten Words are found to be really complete; so that in the form of an exposition of them it is possible to give a view of the whole round of a man's duties to God and to his neighbour. And even though the principle, of love to God and man, were given, it is far from being a matter of course that we should rightly apply the principle to the construction of a detailed code of moral laws. Hence the Decalogue is of the highest value, even as a declaration of duty, a positive revelation of moral law, a supernatural intimation of things which are natural in the sense of being involved in the constitution of our nature. Further, the law, coming to us in the Holy Place, shining in the glory of the covenant of Jehovah, is made majestic as well as lovely: its detailed moralisings flowing from beneath the throne of the Eternal. And along with the natural obligation of creature to Creator, of man to God, there comes into operation through the gospel, as motive to obedience (Ex. xx. 2), the transforming power of gratitude to the gracious Redeemer.

In the New Testament teaching, that foundation of morality is assumed, and proceeded and built upon, as laid in the Old Testament. What now is added, is inculcation of those new views of a Christian man's obligation to "keep this law," and blessedness in keeping it, which arise out of the fresh light of the new dispensation. Thus Peter, in the wondrous new light of immortality (1 Pet. i. 3-9) brought into man's experience through the gospel, finds (vers. 13-17) new motive to the filial fear of God in a life conforming to His holiness of nature, and (vers. 18-23) to brotherly love toward one's fellows as being that which natively belongs to the new immortal life. And so, we shall find, his apostolic teaching runs into a Christian directory, in which the new principle of love, extending to fear of God and honour to all men, embraces all the Christian's life; as the angels daily descending into the

Pool of Siloam made a movement, through a central impulse, of healing agitation, in circle beyond circle, which extended over the whole.

The Heidelberg Catechism, one of the most important of the representative creeds of Reformation or Evangelism, has three heads of Christian doctrine—*our ruin, our redemption, and our gratitude*; and under the head of our gratitude it places *the moral law*. Morality is thus made to spring from the cross (Gal. vi. 14). The Pauline gospel, of free justification by faith (*solâ*), is thus found fruitful of good works; sin dying in the heart, to give place to new obedience of love, when the sinner sees the sinless One, in love, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree. Thus it is the faith that “by love *worketh*” (with transcendental power, *energeia*) (Gal. v. 6; cp. 1 Thess. ii. 13). And in his description of love’s occupation, Paul describes it as *labouring*. The word for *labour* (*κόπος*) in that description is significantly Pauline. It has the special significance of *toiling* (so the verb in Matt. xi. 28). In the Gospels it occurs only in four places; in three of which it means “trouble,” while in the fourth (John iv. 38) it means *toil*. Paul employs it once with the meaning of “trouble” (Gal. vi. 17), and ten times with the meaning of *toil*,—on the part of Paul (especially), or other apostles, or Christians generally. The Christian life, under a central aspect, is thus a labour which is toil. And the toiler in that life is not a slave, but love.

Beyond that, the life of new creation is a very simple matter—simply the life of a new heart. Pliny may thus have been disappointed, expecting to find some “tremendous mystery” in the heart of Christianity. He found his way to the knowledge of that heart, not only through the frank confession of the Christians themselves, but through the declarations of informers, and apostates, and women examined under torture. He thus was enabled to see into the secret place of their assembling, on their “stated day,” before the morning light, for their worship of “Christ as God.” And he may have been immeasurably astonished by the extreme simplicity of the religion which he there saw disclosing the heart of its true life. After worship by means of the word—*carmen*—they went on to what he calls a *sacrament*, a word

which from that time has been in sacred use of Christians. It was a common word for *military oath*, but now meant binding them together in a Solemn League and Covenant with God. And the "tremendous mystery," to which they so sacredly devoted themselves anew, was simply, *to be conscientiously careful in relation to ordinary duties of man to man*—or, as we say, common duties of the second table of the law.

That is characteristic of the true original nature of the religion. And it is very important that this true original character of the religion should be clearly kept in view, both for the practice of the religion and for guidance of men's judgment in the question as to its truth. It is easy for a false religion to have "tremendous mysteries," mystifications at the heart of it, to the effect of imposing upon the imagination, and blinding the reason, and deluding the foolish heart thus darkened, with a vain show of stones and serpents in the place of loaves and fishes. Mystification of this sort has found its way into the Church, at the heart of other corruptions of Christianity. And in especial, there is mystification as to the main plain duties of common life. There is invention of "counsels of perfection," a morality higher and finer than that which the Bible has for ordinary Christians; as if the teachers now were more high and heavenly than Moses, and the apostles, and Christ; or as if the religion had become so fine and high, so ethereal and transcendental, as to find no place and room, no sphere and career, in the common life of men. From the beginning it was not so. The Bithynian confessors and martyrs had not so learned Christ. And, as we shall see, Peter and Paul as well as John have nothing but scorn for a Christianity that is not in common things, and is so lost in love of God as to leave a hungry man unfed. Let us then mark well, and keep our eye stedfastly on the fact, that *the true original Christianity of the apostles makes the religion to be wholly in the common life of man*. The toil, to which it sets aworking that love it brings from heaven, finds in the common life its whole career and sphere. Here is the Christian datum for the Socratic desideratum.

What precisely was the original purpose which 1st Peter was intended to serve at the time of writing it we need not now inquire. For our present purpose it suffices, that the

Epistle gives *a view of Christianity* in its practical bearings on the heart and life. It has so much of coincidence with the Epistle to the Ephesians as to have suggested the impression that Peter must have read that Epistle before writing his own; which the second Peter (2 Pet. iii. 15, 16) is sure to have done if Paul's Epistle was within reach of him. In relation to our purpose the coincidence means, that *that view of Christianity*, to which the coincidence extends, is *common to the two great representative Apostles*, respectively of the Circumcision and of the Gentiles; and was by both of them thought to be of such vital importance, as to call for its being laid before Christians, in first class apostolical Epistles, at a time of momentous crisis of the internal history of the kingdom of God in that apostolic age of its foundation.

In looking at Galilean Peter here addressing Hebrews (1 Pet. i. 1), or at least speaking as the Apostle of the Circumcision, we are again reminded, with peculiar vividness, of the fact, which really appears also in Paul and John and all their associates in the Apostolic Age, that the one religion which, in its purpose and capabilities and proposals, is most comprehensively catholic-human, has emanated from among that people which of all mankind is externally the most intense in narrowness and rigour of exclusiveness. But when we look close into the matter, we perceive that the two things, which appear to be so broadly and strongly at variance, are in reality but one thing in the two stages of the closed bud and the unfolded blossom. Paul, in his manner, will show this out of the Old Testament, "proving and alleging" that the catholic-human comprehensiveness which now is unfolded into view of mankind, was in the heart of this religion ever since faithful Abraham received the promise, that in him and in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. Peter assumes the same view, and proceeds upon it,—in the first chapter, seeing simply the God of Israel dealing with His people according to His manner from of old; and in the first part of the second chapter, seeing simply the Israel of God, with temple, priesthood, sacrifices, and destination to show the excellences of the Divine Redeemer in the world. In substance recognising no change, he even makes no express allusion to the circumstance, that in form, as well as place and time,

everything is completely changed, so that old things are passed away, and all things are become new. But one thing, for him and all, remains unchanged alike in substance and in form; that is, *the obligation, at the very heart of this religion of real life, to keep toiling at the main, plain, common duties of a man.*

The two Epistles are in their nature *pastoral* addresses to Christians about Christianity within themselves or in its own home of the Church. Peter is perhaps in his very nature a pastor, on whose heart Christ has most especially written, "Feed my sheep, feed my lambs." And Paul, though he is a warrior like David, yet like David can relax into shepherd-ing when the battles are fought (and make the lions and bears perceive that a shepherd, too, can fight). And now he is at his ease, writing to his own Ephesians, among whom he laboured so long, and who are so tenderly attached to the hero (Acts xx. 36-38). These two princes of the Church are thus, on a very great occasion, free to pour out their inmost heart as to *what is best for Christians in the world, and best for the world through Christians*, so as to be most for the praise of Him who called the Christians out of the darkness of the world into His own marvellous light of Christ. In that outpouring of the heart each of them has a clear and full directory for Christian living. That Christian directory occupies a commanding place in each Epistle; as if the rest of the Epistle had been only a frame to contain the directory, as a framed picture. And in both Epistles the directory contains *a complete view of the common duties of man to man—and nothing else.*

It has nothing formally preceptive about duties distinctively to God—of the first table of the law. It has nothing about duties to our neighbour in connection with the Church and her ordinances, or with the propagation of Christianity. These things are by Peter hardly alluded to; and though Paul has something to say about them, it is only as in passing, and not as part of the directory. *The directory includes only those common duties which are natural to man, so that they would have been duties of man as man though the Church had never existed, and though there had not been a God.* It is well worth noting carefully that the two apostles of this transcendental religion, bringing down the transcendentalism

of it from its heaven to our earth, thus make the theatre of its operations, the sphere of its activity, to lie, not away at a distance from the common life of man, as if common things were not high enough or fine enough for the religion, but *in* those common things which are in the ordinary life of all humankind on earth; as if to say that this religion has no real place nor part, no reality of life in the world, except among the common things; where it can be made flesh, and dwell among men, so that they may behold its glory as of the Lord. Anchorites, and the recluses of monasteries and nunneries, who profess to have withdrawn *into* a life of "religion," may thus appear to have withdrawn *from* the religious life contemplated by Peter and Paul.

In 1st Peter *the directory occupies the central place*, ii. 11–iii. 11. What goes before that (i. 1–ii. 10) is declaratory, first (i. 3–25), of the source of the new heavenly life of Christians, with its principles of conscientious fear of God and regard to man; and second (ii. 1–10), of the distinctive position of Christians in the world as a community,—the temple, the priesthood, the nation of God among men, visibly manifesting His being in glory of redeeming love upon earth. What follows (iii. 12–v. 14) is in its nature general and occasional; commenting (iii. 12–iv. 19) on the manner and spirit in which Christians are called to meet the trials, perhaps amounting to deadly persecution, which, under the providence of the Father, in the world where they are placed by Him, may arise to them from the world's antipathy to God in the gospel; and concluding (v. 1–14), with some pastoral utterances which again bring to view their peculiar position (ep. i. 1 and ii. 9, 10) as a holy nation, a people that is distinctively God's own (in our version "a peculiar people"), a kingdom not of this world.

In this concluding portion Peter (v. 1) presents himself (ep. i. 1), as an apostle, in a peculiarly engaging and affecting manner. He comes down from his apostolic throne, and places himself on the level of the "elders" apparently (cf. Philem. 9) with an allusion to his being an aged man; and setting forth his fundamental qualification for apostleship in that one detail which is most deeply moving to a Christian—

his being a "witness" (the word is not *ἐπόπτης*, "one who saw," as in 2 Pet. i. 16, but *μάρτυς*, "one who testifies"), not, generally, as to the earthly ministry of Christ, but specifically, of His "sufferings." To the elders (perhaps the *deacons* too, in iv. 10, 11, where our version has "minister," are *official* ministers of Christian liberality) he speaks in a frank, winning, brotherly way, fitted to sustain the genial feeling of brotherhood in the community. And his personal references to Silvanus and to that one at Babylon (whether it be the Church, or an individual female Christian) who is elect with them, and Mark, his son, who also salutes them, are animating and sustaining reminders of their vital relationship (Heb. xii. 18-29) to an immovable kingdom, which is wider as well as more enduring than the world, and in and through all, to that God of whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named. But still, in all that varied apostolicity of setting, the central thing, the picture, is the specification of main plain duties of ordinary human life; so that here we seem to see that cloth of Peter's early vision (Acts x.) let down from heaven, and gathering into itself only those common things of earth, which men professing the transcendentalism of a heavenly religion may be tempted to despise as if, because common, therefore unclean.

When we look close into the detail of the directory, we find that, through selected scruples, it embraces *the whole area* of the common duties of man to man. This it does in three concentric circles, every one of which includes the earthly life of man within itself; while all three together bring into view that life in all its main relationships as simply human—the *political*, the *social*, and the *domestic*. 1. There is the *political* relationship of the citizen to the magistrate, ii. 13-17; 2. There is the *social* relationship of servant to master, ii. 18-25; and 3. There is the *domestic* relationship of wife to husband, iii. 1-7. The city or nation, the workshop or farm, and the home, these include within them all the main natural relationships of man to man upon the earth. They bring nothing else to view; but simply those natural relationships which do not depend for their being on Christianity or the Church, and which, being natural to man as man, would have place—a bad place—in a human society

of atheists. In Ephesians there is to be observed the same thing. Paul has occasion to speak more fully than Peter speaks about the general position of the Church with her ordinances, and the specialties of her condition there and then. But withal he has the directory (Eph. v. 22-vi. 9), distinct and clear as a picture in a frame; the specification of those common duties in which we see the Christian go about the ordinary business of a human being upon earth. Paul, too, has three concentric circles, two of which, regarding wives and servants, are the same as Peter's, while the third, regarding children, where Peter has subjects, is so far different from Peter's as a parent is different from a magistrate; though they have in common that *authority* of natural sovereignty which here is the thing in question. Paul, we observe, like Peter, in his own way deals, through samples in concentric circles, with the whole area of natural human duties of man to man, and *with nothing else*.

What we thus are led to see is like what takes place in that mechanical process through which all the power contained in a volume of fluid is brought to bear in a pressure on one point. *All the transcendentalisms of Christianity are here brought to bear in pressure upon the one point, of the common duty of man to man upon the earth.* Naaman the Syrian was astonished even to bewilderment, as well as offended in his pride, by the perfect simplicity, the seeming childishness, of the thing prescribed to him, washing in the Jordan—as if he had been a baby. And those who went into the wilderness to see that wonderful thing, a prophet of God, may have been astonished, and no doubt some of them were offended, when John the Baptist, by way of their preparation for the reception of Messiah, bade them not level down mountains, but go on with their particular duties of everyday life. General Robert Lee, in a letter to a young friend beginning a military career, gave the following anecdote of the early settlement of America. The Legislature was in session, when there came on a storm so terrific that some thought the end of the world was come, and the sitting was breaking up in alarm. But one said,—No; that on the day of judgment he would desire to be found at his work; and he moved that lights be brought in, and the business of the day

be proceeded with. Such was the *sacramentum* of Pliny's Bithynians; and they may have learned it from 1st Peter.

Huc and Gabet (*Travels in North China and Thibet*) saw in use among the Tartars a *praying mill*. The petitions, committed to the machine, were borne by it up into the sky, as if into the bosom of Jove. In their college education, before they became Christian missionaries, they might have learned that the "religions" of heathenism have been, as regards the peoples, characteristically of the order of the praying mill. The "service" (cp. Isa. i. 27, where "religion" is—*θρησκεία*—religious "service") was not of the people, in their heart and life, but outside of them, by a ritualistic system in whose machinery *they* were not, as the Tartars are not in the mill. But that formalism, of religion by deputy, is not peculiar to heathen populations. And among evangelical Christians, who repudiate the *opus operatum* of ritualism, there often is an *opus operatum* of personal religion. The religion is made to be of the Sabbath and not of the week-day; of the forms of worship, and not of the business of life. And some, who perceive that there is hollowness unless they be really *doing* something, still put the doing away from *their own ordinary, actual* business. "Christian work," with some of these, means, distinctively, work that is *not one's own* business.

Where Socrates would fain bring philosophy down to the earth, they will send the wisdom of God away back into the clouds. The common things of a man's own everyday duty are those on which he spends his *real* life, the life which "he now *lives in the flesh*." If the religion be not *there* in force, it is practically nowhere as a reality. It might as well be immersed in a monastery of droning idlers, or buried in the desert cave of a self-tormenting anchoret, or sent away into the gloomy unseen world of ancient Egypt. The reality is lost. *The man* is not serving God—on the week-day in his working clothes. So the Old Testament, with its multitudinous particularism, accustoms Israel in childhood to serve God in *everything*, making all work to be worship. And when the period of maturity arrives, with principles in place of precepts, still the priestly service is to be in everything;—for instance, in the soldier's feelings about his allowances and

pay (Luke iii. 14; cp. Heb. xiii. 5), and his dealing with opportunities of remunerative knavery as informer or spy. And here Peter is as resolute an Hebrew as Moses or John the Baptist. "High-flying," abandoning common things as not appropriate to transcendentalism of life, makes hollow unreality of life. It made the Stoic's life a sullen haughty ghost of manhood, which could be cruel in its heartless pride; and it made the old Egyptian manhood sink into a listless apathetic mummy. The restoration from that low and lost condition is effected, first, by bringing redemption to Israel, supernaturally, in sovereign grace "abounding to the chief of sinners;" and second, in application of that redemption, by bringing the principles of it, as a sunshine and a gracious rain, into the very heart of man, so as to be operative in his practice all through the length and breadth of common life.

Warburton's paradox, about a future life as not made known by Moses, thus was near to an important fact, relatively to the discipline of religion in Israel for mankind. There was no concealment of the unseen future. But there was a *concentration*, upon the present visible life, of all the light, and potency of the light of God, in supernatural revelation, shining out from the unseen eternity. All Palestine was thus as a temple of Jehovah, full of pictorial illustrations of redemption. The religion was not only there along with common life: it *was* the common life. The nation was a Church. Its politics were theocracy. Where we think of the soul's immortality, an Israelite thought of life's transcendentalism in God; but the transcendental life in God was for him that common life which now he lived in the flesh. The ordinary life of a human being was the Bush, in and through which the luminous flame of heavenly transcendentalism was to appear, making holy ground.

We thus can see how it came about that the people which, to a proverb, were outwardly the narrowest sectarians of mankind, have become the radiant centre of the true catholic universalism (John iv. 22, 23). That was made possible by the fact, that the religion of Israel, founded on the living God, the Creator and Ruler of all, the only Redeemer, is exercised in the common things of human life,

which are the same in substance for all nations and all ages. This native universality of the religion is demonstrated by Paul, who is "an Hebrew of the Hebrews." And it is seen and shown by Peter, the Apostle of the Circumcision. What we see in his Epistle is, not that the New Testament system is the antitype of the Old,—what was meant by the Old in its prophecy; what was foreshadowed by the Old in its ritual,—but (1 Pet. ii. 1-9) that this is *that thing itself*. It is Israel's religion, of the heart and in the life, in filial fear of God and brotherly love to man, exercised in common duties, here (ver. 11), where we are "strangers and pilgrims." What is called for is the heart, in reality of life (Ps. li. 17-19). The religion has a sacrifice. But the formality of sacrifice might really be a criminal disobedience (1 Sam. xv. 22). And reality of sacrifice, on the part of a people which (Ex. xix. 6) was a nation of priests, was constituted appropriately by all the real, common life of that people, in the spirit of "holiness to the Lord." The religion could be universal, because the temple is man's heart, and the service is in the ordinary life of a man. The two dwellings of the religion are, man's heart as the temple of God, and God's heart (Matt. xi. 29) as the home and rest of man.

Universality of realism, through spirituality of nature, was declared by Christ (John iv. 22, 23) as folded in the foundation truth of the Old Testament regarding the character of spirituality in God. Two things in the primitive Christianity were peculiarly offensive in strangeness to the heathen. One was, that the Christians were not a people, but only a promiscuous "dregs" of human kind. The other was, that in their worship they had not any visibility of divine presence shown and realised through images or other sensuous representations. But these precisely were the two things in respect of which this religion was fit to be catholic-human universal. It gathers all mankind into its communion, and engaged all manhood in the service. For the religion is in the essence of it spiritual, such that God is present wherever man worships Him in the spirit; and the worship can, in the spirit of true service, be wherever the man is placed, doing the ordinary business of his mundane life, in the filial fear of God, and in the due regard for man.

The common-place toilsomeness of labouring at ordinary duties, which in their often sordid realism have nothing of "romance" of religion, is trying to the faith and love. But (1 Pet. i. 7) it is the *trial* of the faith that is "more precious than gold" (see the Gr.). The "will-worship" of those who fly away to services which God hath not required at their hand, or to sacrifices which may be a mere arbitrary self-tormenting, is an *avoidance of task work*, and at least may be a lazy selfishness (as of a son who neglects the farm-work, and toils very hard at "sports"). Yet it may disguise itself as aspiration after a "higher Christian life." A lady, professedly wishing to give herself wholly to a "higher Christian life," consulted a minister of the gospel about a step she had thought of taking as a means toward that end; namely, separation from her husband, who, she said, was worldly or ungodly. The minister did not, as she may have expected, applaud her purpose; but he said,—“Madam, go home; you are worse than an infidel.” He thus appears to have been of the mind of Keble, which many Christians have accepted in their spiritual song,—

“The trivial round, the common task,
Will furnish all we ought to ask :
Room to *deny* ourselves, a road
To bring us daily near to God.”

The point thus made by Christianity is distinctly redemption of *the real life* of man,—not the Sabbath-day life merely, but the week-day life; not only the high religious festival, but the everyday routine of toil and moil, “the trivial round, the common task.” And that point receives additional emphasis from what we now proceed to observe further in the directory for a Christian life, as given both by Peter and by Paul. We have seen that the directory embraces all the common life of man on earth within the three concentric circles of the nation or city, the workshop or farm, and the home; and shows the man through sample in his three main relationships by nature—the political, the social, and the domestic. What we now observe is the *selection* of sample in every one of these relationships. In every one of these relations there are two cases to be selected from, that of the superior and that of the inferior. And in every one

of the three relationships the case which Peter selects is *that of the inferior*, whose duty may be difficult and irksome: not the magistrate, but the subject; not the master, but the servant; not the husband, but the wife. Among mankind, as addressed by the apostles, the inferior in every one of the cases of subject, servant, and wife was, in point of law and fact, in a position of cruel disadvantage of injustice, alien to the spirit of the gospel, and destined to abolition through the gospel. But this apostle does not speak of the disadvantage and injustice of the time. He speaks only of the *natural duty of the station*. And he brings all the transcendentalism of religion to bear in pressure upon this one point, that those who are in the inferior position should do the natural duty of the position.

The same effect is produced by Paul through his directory in a different manner. He does not select one of the parties in the relationship for exclusive dealing; he deals with both inferior and superior—wives and husbands, children and parents, servants and masters. But he handles the matter in such a manner as to show that in the application of Christianity to common duties, there is to be peculiar carefulness relatively to *the difficult and disagreeable duties* of the inferior position with its liability to the disadvantages of cruel injustice. That he accomplishes by a twofold process. First (Eph. v. 21) he places, as *preface* to the whole directory, the general exhortation, “Be *in subjection* to one another,”—thus showing that in the whole plan of the system of duties it is intended especially that *men should be subject*, that love should have to labour in a position of inferiority. And then, second, when he goes into the details, *in every one of the relationships he begins with the inferior*,—first, the wife, the child, the servant before the husband, the parent, the master; as if to show that this religion is especially, in the first place, above all things not to be abandoned, but to be practised in the common life of *greatest disadvantage*, of inglorious obscurity, and helpless exposure to foul wrong.

There might arise a question whether the position could not be lawfully abandoned. In relation to one of the positions, that of a subject of the Roman empire, the question could be little more than a speculative one. For practically

it must have ordinarily been a mere physical impossibility for a Christian, when persecuted in one city, really to flee into another. For instance, Polycarp in the second century, and Cyprian in the third, withdrew for a little from the storm of persecution; but they both suffered martyrdom. And Gibbon—who can write well when not blinded by hatred of the gospel—shows vividly how utterly hopeless it would have been for one under the ban of the empire to endeavour to escape, either by fleeing beyond its bounds, or by hiding himself within them; where from the central seat of power almost every acre of the imperial world could be searched by keen official eyes as well as reached by strong armed hands. But in relation to the positions of wife and of slave, the question, between retaining and abandoning it, might call for an answer. Thus in the case referred to by Justin Martyr, of the wife who sought a legal separation from her husband, it is a question of Christian casuistry whether she ought to have sought the separation. And in the case of a slave, who might be a far superior man to his heathen owner, the question about remaining in the position may have been difficult, though many Christians of our day might think it almost a matter of course that the abused servant should—say, per “underground railway”—escape from the position if he could.

The question regarding both positions came to Paul (1 Cor. vii.) for a solution, apparently with reference to particular cases of real urgency at Corinth. And it is striking with what clear decision the apostle pronounces *against abandonment of the position*, and in favour of retaining that as a matter of strict obligation. Not only the believing wife *may* remain with the unbelieving husband, but she must; *she has no right to separate* of her own motion; if there is to be separation, it must be by his action, or on his part (1 Cor. vii. 8–17). The slave, in like manner, is not released from his obligation to serve man through becoming a Christian, serving God; but is bound to *make the best of* the position (though, unlike the wife’s, it is naturally and in itself undesirable and evil), while it can be occupied without sin (vers. 18–24). The principle of decision in both cases is that *Christianity takes a man where it finds him, and that*

where it finds him is the place for him to be a Christian in:—“As God hath called each, so let him walk” (ver. 17). “Let each man, wherein he was called, therein abide with God” (ver. 24). What the Christian has to do with the position is not to leave it, but to retrieve it, holding it for God.

The temptation to flee from the position must have often been very powerful. It is difficult for us to realise the painfulness to Christian conscience, and even to Christian feelings of decency, which must have arisen from the surroundings of ordinary life in that time of heathen ascendancy in power yet unbroken,—an ascendancy, be it ever remembered, broken for mankind of all ages by the Christianity of that first age, so that heathenism in the world was thenceforward a *broken* thing. Everywhere, in private life as well as public, idolatry all-powerful was so inwrought into the customs of society, that a man could hardly move without coming into contact with something idolatrous, which might have no meaning for the careless, but which to a tender Christian conscience might occasion difficulty most painful. In the shadow of that idolatry there were the characteristic “pollutions” of heathenism, then unbridled and shameless in abomination, like the foul things which crept over Egypt in the plagues. It is impossible now for a man to explain to his family how much cause they have to be thankful to Christianity for the amount of mere common decency that there is in the surroundings of ordinary human life where that religion has exercised real influence in the world. The accusations brought against the Christians of their being unhumane, ungenial, ghostly haters of human society, really meant that the Christians had to absent themselves from ordinary human intercourse in order to avoid entanglements to conscience, and revolting offences to their feelings of moral decency, which in that society awaited them at every step. But the difficulty, the entanglement, the loathsomeness must have been felt most intensely and intolerably where the relation was the most intimate, on the farm or in the workshop, and above all in the house, where believers were unequally yoked together with unbelievers.

Still, the position had to be remained in with God: *it had*

to be made good, and mastered, and conquered for Him. It is here, above all, that we see the formidable difficulty of that enterprise to which Christians were called, as it must have been apprehended and felt by themselves. It was not merely that they had to confront the perils of injury to worldly goods, or liberty, or life. And it was not only that, to their own apprehension, they were at the same time (Eph. vi. 10-14) going into war against malignant unclean demons then in command of the world. They had to *live* as Christians in a state of things which to their feeling might be as a fiery furnace, where Christian life was a daily and hourly warfare against those who were naturally the nearest and dearest, so that a man's especial foes were those of his own household. In that great war, for the redemption of society from the tyranny of evil, the sorest battle was, not that of the confessor or the martyr, nerved for a short though sharp agony of trial by the publicity of the occasion, and the sympathy of Christians, and the high excitement of the conflict, but that of the wife or slave, undergoing a lifelong crucifixion of which no one ever heard, at the hands, or from the character and conduct of those among whom there had to be spent a life of daily dying, of exile in the home, of excommunication from the heart of the household.

Now, let us look at the various positions in detail :—

(1.) *The citizen-political relationship*, 1 Pet. ii. 12-17.

Cardinal Newman (*Apologia*) had in his boyhood a day-dreaming speculation about what constitutes "the spirit of a nation," or "the genius of a people;" namely, that it may be a semi-personal power, distinct from the people, but having existence only in and for the people collectively, and influencing their action so as to determine their good or evil fortunes. Thus he thought of the genius of the Anglo-Saxon race as "the angel John Bull." The people, represented by that semi-personal genius or spirit, may be a slave; as Israel was in Egypt. And national bondage is for mankind undesirable, because repressive of individual freedom, and otherwise preventing formation of that completed fulness of manhood or womanhood in social relations which constitutes the true

"civilisation." The old-world empire was toward individual freedom a dead mechanical repressive power; because it suppressed or repressed nationality, in which individuals are best placed for cherishing their social character into completed formation. And Israel's exodus was the beginning of history for mankind; because it was the beginning of distinct existence of free nationalities.

Christianity is not anti-social, but essentially social. The Church is the kingdom of God establishing itself among men through their social affections; and its institutions are framed for encouragement and guidance of those affections, so that human life may be a perpetual sacrament of brotherly love (Heb. xiii. 1). Further, this new kingdom is not intended to interfere with the natural constitution of society. Christ said, "My kingdom is not of this world." Peter says, "honour the king." A claim for "the Church" to lord it over the state, to exercise supremacy over the nation, is anti-christian; and on the part of an individual to disobey the civil magistrate is sinful, as it is sinful for children to disobey their parents; all the more sinful if the sinner be a Christian; above all, if he make his Christianity a cloak for the wickedness of so setting at nought an ordinance of God. At the same time this religion provides both for the freedom of the individual's life and for a radical change of all the political life of men, so as to be effectively a political "regeneration" of mankind.

It works this beneficent wonder through the heart of the individual. In the primitive time the state, which we see in the Roman empire, was to the Christian an oppressor, cruel and unjust. But in the apostolic writings it is remarkable how uniformly respectful is the tone of the references to temporal magistracy on the part of men who had a keen strong sense of right and wrong, and were perfectly fearless as ministers of the righteous Judge of all the earth. "The king," upon the imperial throne when Peter wrote (1 Pet. ii. 17), was the monster Nero. He is the individual immediately in view in the precept "*honour* the king," uttered in the same breath with "fear God." And the precept is not a mere generalisation of "honour all men." It has in it the *specialty* of inculcating respectful obedience to the temporal

magistrate; obedience of that kind which children owe their parents (fifth commandment), but of that kind the highest in degree, because the king is "supreme,"—the highest under heaven in respect of that authority, which is an image of the sovereignty of "the King eternal, immortal, invisible." This (Rom. xiii. 1–8) is part of the one great debt of love which Christians are peculiarly bound to pay, because "he that loveth is born of God." And their discharge of this duty is not to be merely perfunctory, for convenience or prevention of friction in their lives, but conscientious as in the fear of God, and as a practice of the religion of the heart. In that spirit, prayers are to be offered for magistrates and all in authority (1 Tim. ii. 1–5; Titus iii. 2, where observe that these are the *Pastoral* Epistles: the instructions are for the training of congregations in a Christian life).

No doubt government of any sort is better than anarchy. In the worst possible persecution, Christians ordinarily get more "good" from the magistrate through his simply maintaining some sort of order in society, than it is possible for him to inflict upon them of evil. But the apostles are not thinking mainly of the good which thus comes from the ordinance to Christians, who thus may well pray for its prosperity. Nor are they thinking only of the magistrate as a man who has a soul to be saved, and need of being prayed for like other men. They are thinking specially of the *institution* or constitution of civil government, and the natural obligation of Christians, as well as other men, to give "honour to whom honour is due," and so to render "unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's," even as they render to God the things which are God's.

The individual may have a personal power and responsibility relatively to the conduct of public affairs; and (when he thus is a "magistrate" himself) it may be his public duty to draw sword against a magistrate abusing his public trust of office, as when it was said, "To your tents, O Israel;" or to agitate in other ways for a change of the constitution or the laws. That possibility is not in view of the apostles. In their instructions to the Christians, they contemplate simply the ordinary relationship of the individual, as a *subject* to the constituted state, as the *sovereign*. It happens that the state

in this case is a world-empire, and the sovereignty is vested in an absolute monarch. But that is a temporal matter for the peoples to arrange among themselves under God. The apostles do not directly meddle with it, but simply take the state as they find it, and deal with the natural duty of an individual to the state; as we should deal with the natural duties of child to parent, though the parent should be a Turk. Whether the form of government is to be absolute or constitutional, monarchical, aristocratic or democratic, or mixed, is no business of the apostles. What they have to do with is the fact of civil government as, like parentage, a natural constitution to which all Christians owe affectionate respect and obedience "in the Lord."

Already we see that the gospel is regenerating society by putting a new heart into citizenship. But now, as we look further into that citizen's new heart, we further see into a profound alteration that is entering into the spirit of the life of political relationship. In the Christian citizen's own heart and life we perceive a new domain of independent freedom—the freedom of individual conscience and soul. To the individual, democratic republic may be as despotic as absolute monarch. Socrates was not suffered to be free, "calling his soul his own," under the Athenian *demos* any more than if he had been a subject of the tyrant of Syracuse. And in a democracy there is for individual freedom no effectual safeguard under heaven but "the gospel of the kingdom." Rare heroic souls like that of Socrates may, without the inward supporting strength of that kingdom, be able to confront the threatening tyranny of men. Where the gospel is believed, that inward supporting strength is in the commonalty of souls, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

It may sometimes be difficult to see the line beyond which to obey man would be to disobey God; though ordinarily, "to the upright the light ariseth in the darkness." Generally there is, beyond the civil ruler's right to dictate, the whole circuit of distinctively "spiritual" or Church life. That is the domain of Christ. In relation to that, Christians are bound to take the law only from Him, and to disregard any dictation of temporal magistracy as antichristian arrogation of the Redeemer's Crown-right. But beyond that there may be

things in respect of which the temporal magistrate commands the citizen to do what is wrong, what is forbidden by God. In that case it is a duty to disobey. And the Christian citizen has in him a strength to disobey, an *imperium in imperio* ; because He knows the living God, and has conscience toward Him.

Further, the gospel, drawing men together, and uniting them in reciprocal affection of honour and love, tends to foster *nationality* or society in these larger sections of mankind, which for working purposes of the new kingdom it is found convenient to associate into the union of a "national" Church. This ordinarily (cp. 1 Pet. i. 1) is found to be most conveniently practicable on natural lines of unity—say, in language, and especially geographical situation. The "ten kingdoms" of Daniel's Fifth Monarchy are an inevitable result of the operation of the gospel. Not only it shatters the idol of a universal empire of man, by establishing the throne of God as the only one sovereign,—“King of kings and Lord of lords,”—so that the true *Basileus* is Jesus Christ. It calls nationalities into being, not merely through disintegration of that heathen empire, but by reintegration of manhood ; drawing out men's affections to a wider circle than that of the family, the city, the province ; as the circle formed by the angel in descending into Siloam's pool extended through widening circle after circle until it “filled all in all.”

How wide the nation shall be it is not for the apostles to say : let that settle itself, like the form of civil government. The British empire is greater than the Roman empire was ; and the American United States appear on the way to be so. But in these great peoples the imperialism does not weaken, but encourages and strengthens the affections and active sympathies of a free national citizenship. For in the heart of them there is working a principle of restored unity, which reaches far beyond nationality, and yet conserves and fosters it. That is, brought clear and full to light in the Fifth Monarchy, the Last Empire, the principle of the unity of mankind, originated in creation by God, and to be restored through the redemption that is by Christ. That principle operated powerfully in the Crusades. With all the worldly selfishness and folly that entered into those enterprises, they were

powerfully under the animating and impulsive influence of the great idea of God's right to rule the world, of Christ's title to be sole sovereign over all its kingdoms, and of a destination of humanity to be a universal brotherhood of mankind in His domain. And that idea wrought inwardly upon the peoples that were moved by it. They regarded one another, not as "natural enemies," but as *sister* nationalities, a *family* of nations. When the French courtiers welcomed the news of the death of lion-hearted Richard, the bitter and formidable rival of their king, their king said that they ought rather to mourn, since one of the two eyes of Christendom was darkened. Such a conception as this implied, of a grander unity beyond one's own particular race, would have been quite impossible for the Greeks who fought at Marathon, or for the Romans of the most "virtuous" period of the republic. It is living in every heart in which the gospel is believed.

(2.) *The servant : social relationship*, 1 Pet. ii. 18-25.

In America the word "servant" gave place to "help," because the bondage of the blacks had caused the word to be associated with bond-service or slavery. In the primitive time the word (*δοῦλος*) ordinarily meant slave, because free service was little known ; so that usually it was not necessary to specify the circumstance of a servant's being "under the yoke." The essence of the condition is *involuntary* subjection to another, and ownership on his part, in which respects the servant resembles a son. Accordingly, in ancient Israel, the bond-servant ate of the Passover lamb along with the family, being a member of that body along with them. The relation in its essence has in it nothing immoral ; hence slave-owners were unchallenged members of the Church, both under the Old Testament and under the apostles. In certain conditions it may be a desirable form of service ; as when Abraham had three hundred and eighteen servants of his household *bearing arms* ; and an Israelite was sometimes found choosing to continue in bondage, with its easy security, rather than go free into anxious perils of self-help.

But the son is in every case emancipated from pupillage by

a natural process when he is ripe for it. The slave, on the other hand, being valuable property, is liable to be all his lifetime held in bondage. For life-long continuance the position has in it something unnatural, excepting in an early stage of civilisation; since the species of subjection and ownership which it implies are incompatible with the free action of manhood in its full formation. The slave, besides, has not ordinarily the protection and the delight of those natural affections of the family toward a son, which may go to the excess of spoiling the child through sparing the rod. And the owner's selfish worldliness may impel him to positively repress the cultivation of the servant's faculties, under the impression that education of the man might make the drudge less useful. In countries where the owner had power of life and death, the servant might be made the victim of cruelty irremediable. Where the slave population was numerous, as a *caste* in some sort of antagonism to the citizen caste, there was apt to be a settled habit of reciprocal antipathy between bond and free, which might be formidable, and could hardly fail to be productive of much of strained unhappiness. Human society was thus in the condition of a convict ship, with one class chained to the oar, and another class watching them on peril of their lives. And there was no "sign" of deliverance. The free nationalities were being broken down by imperial force; and even among them, where society was in any measure matured, there might be a slave caste held as property of the freeman.

The emancipation came through the gospel. It was not by any such machinery as "underground railway," or abolitionist agitation. American citizens might, rightly or wrongly, believe themselves to be entitled or bound to take such action on account of their political position, of opportunity and influence, in a republic of which they were citizens, and for whose action they had a joint responsibility. The apostles and primitive Christians as a class were (1 Pet. ii. 11) in the world as outsiders, "strangers and pilgrims." They did not regard themselves as authorised or entitled to deal with such a matter directly, for amendment of the existing constitution. But in this case, too, leaving the natural relationship to those who had a direct responsibility and

power, they set themselves to deal with the matter indirectly, through *the individual*. It is to be noted that, though the slaves in their community (1 Cor. i. 26, etc.) must have been very numerous, and there was great readiness to accuse them unjustly, specially as disturbers, it does not appear that, even unjustly, the Christians were accused of anything like abolitionism. Yet they thoroughly secured emancipation.

Paul's dealing with cases of conscience in 1 Cor. vii. is valuable, as reminding us what need the apostles had of supernatural aid of strength and guidance in the vast complexity of difficulty imposed on those who had to lead in this great revolution, and bring order out of the chaos of a society disintegrated into its first elements. The case of the slave was determined by Paul (vers. 20-25) upon the principle that the gospel is not intended to directly change a man's position, but *to change the man*, so that he may "*remain with God*" in the position in which the gospel finds him. He recognised the fact that slavery is not, like marriage, an intrinsically desirable condition for a man; and, especially, not desirable for a Christian man whose vocation is distinctively into freedom. Still, it was not in itself sinful. It was possible to live purely in it "with God." And the gospel call to men in such a position is not, of course, leave it, but be sure to serve God in it. This did not exclude lawful endeavours for emancipation; as a free labourer may endeavour to "*better his position*," *e.g.* by becoming an employer.

The actual process of emancipation, consistently with that seemingly adverse decision of Paul, is shown in Paul's own dealing with the case of Onesimus (Philem.). A whole Apostolic Epistle—the "emancipation" Epistle—is devoted to the emancipation alone. But it leaves the slave a slave, and the owner an owner. *The emancipation here consists in giving to them both a brother's heart in Jesus Christ.* Onesimus has been converted by the instrumentality of Paul in prison. He was a runaway slave, and perhaps had been a bad one. In any case, he has somehow been a costly one to his owner. And now, therefore, Paul, in order to smooth the way to his being received back with kindness to his place, engages himself to make good whatever Philemon may have lost by that

“unprofitable servant.” (Query,—Would Paul have had *the means* of this if he had been corresponding with the Corinthians instead of the Philippians? “Undesigned coincidence.”) Philemon is a Christian, under the deepest obligation to Paul, who would have been well entitled to command him in this matter. But he chooses not so much as to request of him anything *beyond what he owes to Onesimus as a Christian*—namely, brotherly love. He is not requesting a favour of him, but conferring an important service on him, by giving him a beloved brother instead of a worthless slave. But still the relationship of slave to owner is not meddled with by Paul. He fully respects the right to replacement of the fugitive, and compensation for losses arising out of that relation. And, having placed the two heart to heart as brothers, he leaves the emancipation to itself.

It is fairly under way. The slave in Israel was his owner's brother, of the covenant seed or by “the adoption.” Abraham's three hundred and eighteen spearmen did not need police protection against cruelty of one old man. The slave Eliezer was apparently his designated heir; at least, he was the trusted friend of that friend of God. Christian men of good standing in the congregation, perhaps office-bearers in the Church, may be slaves in form of law; but the word has lost its meaning in reality of fact. Their owner may sit at their feet to learn the wisdom of God from them, or in his fellow-feeling he may pass along with them through the deep of their own great trials. No human law can make a heathen bondage in reality out of the relation of Onesimus to Philemon. The matter begins with the first breath of Christian life in individuals. It extends to the community. “Slaves cannot breathe in England” is a literal fact. But the fact is not made by the soil of that free land; there were slaves in Saxondom. Do we not know Garth and Wamba? What makes freedom to be in the air is (2 Cor. iii. 17) a heavenly thing, which has made men to be new in the spirit (“breath”) of their mind. And when that comes to be fact through the gospel of Christ, the law of the peoples will adjust itself “in a concatenation accordingly,”—though it should be at the cost of twenty millions, or of a great civil war.

That itself is a “consolation,” for which men may well be

“waiting in Israel.” But Peter has a grander view of the matter. He now remembers (1 Pet. v. 1) the sufferings of Christ. He may perhaps remember that he saw a black man, of his own name of Simon, made to bear the Cross. We happen to know that (from Peter, Mark xv. 21) salvation came to the household of that Cross-bearer. And now perhaps the apostle thinks of cross-bearing by a slave as a means of salvation to the household of the owner, a plant of renown giving forth refreshing fragrance when trodden under foot of men. The singularly powerful statement which we have in this section of the Epistle as to fact in the history of atonement, reconciliation with God through the death of His Son, redemption of lost men through the expiatory sufferings of God-incarnate, comes in simply as a picture (“example”) to cruelly abused slaves of what a slave’s position, at the worst of it, can be made by God’s grace in the gospel. In fact, the apostle here actually employs the gospel of that grace for producing the effect he is thinking of.

The redemption of society must have cost the primitive Christians a vast amount of personal suffering. The heathen slave becoming Christian might be a greatly superior human being to the owner of him or her. There might be humiliations and cruelties on account of a malignant sense of inferiority on their part. The “pollutions,” which once were hardly noticed by the slave, might now be to his new heart unendurable in the horror of them—“Oh! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” More terrible, perhaps, was the condition of Christian slaves, male or female, of a lower and a feebler type, feeling that the power of resistance to the tempter was giving way in them, or even that the old “pollutions” were beginning to resume a fatal power of fascination. Peter, a Galilean Hebrew of the Old School, trained to reverence manhood by old Hebrew traditions of heroic men and woman, and now familiarised with the true ideal of manhood in the Son of God, must, with his own warm human heart, have been keenly susceptible to the pity and the terror of that situation so deeply tragic. But he has not even so much as a look of thinking of their fleeing from it.

“When thou are converted,” Christ said to him, “strengthen the brethren.” And for this greatest trial, perhaps, to which

the strength of men or women could be put in that heathen world, the strength which he brings is the "example" of the suffering of Christ. The position is painful, humiliating, dreadful. But to this we are called by that example. Not self-indulgence, nor self-pity, but self-denial, even to self-crucifixion. And here is what may come out of the slave's remaining there "with God." Not only in that household there may be blessing—through the breaking of this alabaster box. *The position is redeemed.* And God is honoured, Christ is glorified, by the slave's endurance of his bitter cross; remaining there to retrieve the position for man, conquering and maintaining it for God, though it should be through a humiliation and sufferings unto death: "so the dead Douglass won the field." The redemption of society is thus to be accomplished, not through men's fleeing from its difficult positions, but through their acceptance of the position in which Providence has placed them, facing the difficulty of it, bearing the cross of it, so that it shall be definitively won; and so as to make it appear that there is no position on earth in which Christ is not to be made glorious, through occupation of it, "with God," by those whom He has loved and washed from their sins in His blood, and made unto our God kings and priests.

(3.) *The wife: domestic relationship*, 1 Pet. iii. 1-8.

The relation of Socrates to Xantippe does not appear to have scandalised his friends and admirers; though in our time such bearing as his was toward his wife, on the part of a man of any such position before the world, would be almost inconceivable. On her part we do not see that there was any irritability that was not natural in her case; that might not be manifested as vividly by a Christian matron of this century, if her husband were habitually to make her the laughing-stock of his learned friends when they come to hear his wisdom in her house. What most impresses us on the surface of the whole matter is, not anything in the action of that poor abused drudge, but the utter want of *gentlemanly* feeling on the part of those "philosophers," the finest in the

heathen world, along with their "prince." It seems as if heathenism were essentially a savage thing, and heathen philosophy only the varnish of a savage.

And that want of manly feeling toward the weaker sex may thus be symptomatic of a want more woful—the want, namely, of that which Peter appeals to when he speaks (ver. 7) of the husband "giving *honour* unto the wife." In adding, "as unto the weaker vessel," he does not speak disparagingly, but addresses himself to that true manly feeling of respectful tenderness which in the exaggerating sentimentalism of Christian "chivalry" ran into a sort of idolising veneration for the accident of sex. The great word "*honour*"—as to a rare and precious thing like gold—is employed with reference to parents, to magistrates, to the king, and to God. It is extended by Peter (ii. 17) to that manhood which is the image of God. And in the prevalent heathen feeling toward woman there seems to have been a woful want,—want of recognition of that rational soul, which is the divine image in every human being, the only thing "*honourable*," really calling for reverence in a human being—even a philosopher.

Of a lingering recognition of the spiritual equality of the sexes there are traces in the Greek heroic age, in republican Rome, and, strangely, in ancient Egypt long after it had become a sub-empire of the Greeks. But in the ordinary savage, whether simply unadorned or varnished with a quasi-civilisation, that one thing, which alone can (ver. 8) make a heavenly heart of true home in the household, is wanting. Tacitus perhaps was obliquely satirising his own degenerate Romans when he described such a thing as existing among the noble "*barbarians*" of Germany. Cornelius Nepos can hardly be other than a true witness when he says by implication, that the Greeks, in their boastful centre of the ultimate heathen civilisation, would be ashamed to allow the ladies of the household to show face at a gathering of the husband's friends there. Wherever we look, we perceive that the "*honour*" which the apostle claims for woman is a stranger in the heathen world.

The German wife in Tacitus, who shares her husband's perils and toils as well as thoughts, is honourable if somewhat

unfemininely formidable; but may to some extent be the creation of Tacitus, a "philosophical historian," in Rousseau's vein, ostensibly praising "the noble savage," but meaning disparagement of the civilisation of his own people. The original typical Roman matron has under the empire given place to a very different type of female character. But Peter (1 Pet. iii. 5, 6), if he wish to place before the women of the new kingdom an example for imitation, can find that in the devout women of that kingdom in its older time.

There is nothing like it in the heathen world. The female characters of Scripture are so familiar to us, and they are in so many ways reproduced in Christian society, that only by an effort of abstraction can we realise the fact that the sort of woman that comes into being through formative influence of the Bible religion, is a different species of human being from everything that has existed outside of that influence; so as to be, in respect of what is excellent, distinctly a creation of that religion. The women of the Bible are not masculine, though one of them should be a prophetess; much less are they Amazonian, though one should be a Hebrew Boadicea. They are womanly, feminine. But they are women in the full sense of being "honourable." Without being forward or mannish, they *are*: they have a substantive existence, along with the other sex, in full recognition of standing, as an integrating moiety in the citizenship of Israel, in the royalty of the family of God upon earth. Families like that of Bethany were inconceivable in the heathen world. Nowhere in that world can we see anything that answers to the description "a mother in Israel," or to the picture of a tenderly wise domestic counsellor, the family prophetess and queen, in Israel's Book of Proverbs. The great history of Greece, in its properly historical period, is one in which woman's part is insignificant, and not suggestive of "honour" to the sex. On the other hand, without the women of Scripture, the Bible would be a changed book. It would be bereft of an element which, not filling a large space to the eye, imparts a peculiar quality of spiritual beauty and tenderness to the whole; such as the personality of Lucy Hutchinson imparts to the *Memoir* of her husband, the Christian hero.

The specialty in woman, in which the apostle sees her

source of influence for good, is *winningness* or *attractiveness* ("Rebekah meant 'attractive'"). The word he here employs (*κερδαίνειν*,—Revised Version, "gained") has in it historically a shade of meaning which may tend by contrast to brighten what Peter has in view. His female readers might have known that the distinctive attractiveness of women could be employed by paganism for a not honourable service of the "religions." The Hebrew women must have known of that in Egypt before they gave up their "looking-glasses" for the structure of the sanctuary laver. And it well became the daughters of the true God to consecrate their looking-glasses to the purpose of purity in the court of the sanctuary. As their especial gift is beauty, the especial sanctuary use of it is as a "winning" grace. Rebekah does not seem to have a memorably sanctified use of her attractiveness. She disappears from history after having deceived her husband, and broken up her household through banishment of her favourite. It is not she, but her nurse Deborah, that has a monument in *The Oak of Mourning*. The attractive influence, which Peter sees in his model woman, was in the old exercised in the straightforward legitimate way, of the duty of the position, illustrated in a wife's being subject to her own husband:—as if "she stoops to conquer." And the means of that influence is to consist, not in the ornamentation of a doll,—vividly exhibited by Homer in his picture of a goddess (Juno) arming herself for "conquest" of her husband (Jove),—but in the adornment of a soul, through which the woman is placed on the highest level attainable to a human being. In this way there comes to be, as the new heart of a regenerate human society, the Christian household (1 Pet. iii. 8), with (vers. 9–12) God as a glory within it, and a wall of fire around it.

(4.) *Further note on Paul's directory*, Eph. v. 22–33.

He approaches the subject in a different way, finding illustration of the conjugal relationship in the relation of Christ as Redeemer to His Church. This analogy, appearing in various prophetic utterances, has been taken as a key to

the spiritual significance of the *Song of Songs*, and appears in the apocalyptic description of "the bride, the lamb's wife." What Paul emphasises is not the spiritual equality of the two spouses, but, in a remarkable manner, what may be spoken of as an *organic unity*. And of that unity he makes a very important practical application (1 Cor. vii.) in his reasoning for prohibition of a separation on the Christian wife's part from an unbelieving husband. The reason in effect is, that *the family is made Christian through the Christianity of one of its heads*. Hence, the children of that family are not heathen, but Christian. In formality of Church-law, infant circumcision (cp. Rom. iv. 10) shows that the child of a citizen of God's kingdom is a born citizen of that kingdom. But Paul's representation, of a "holiness" which is in the children, taken along with what he says of the "great mystery" symbolised by the organic unity of the parents, may point, beyond the formality of law, to a reality of fact, a real Christianisation of the household through the (resident) Christianity of one of the householders.

We might have expected to find in the Apostolic Scriptures a full view of the process or method of overcoming the peculiar difficulty occasioned by polygamy. There is in this case a difficulty which does not exist in those of the abused slave and the oppressed subject. They can remain in the position "with God," suffering wrongfully without sinning. On the other hand, a Christian could not have several wives, nor be one of several wives, without violation of the original domestic constitution, now authoritatively construed by Christ, "*they twain shall be one flesh*." The difficulty in dealing with a case of polygamy might be aggravated by the Mosaic toleration of certain things (Matt. xix. 8) "on account of the hardness of men's hearts;" a toleration which might conceivably be pleaded as a reason against rigorous peremptory dealing with emergent cases in application of the primæval original constitution.

We do not find evidence of there having been emergent cases (like those of slaves and wives in 1 Cor. vii.) in experience of the Apostolic Church. Remembering the sad experience of the Vicar of Wakefield, we will take no part in the question as to the prescription of monogamy to a bishop

or elder,—namely, whether it is not a prohibition of second marriage to an ecclesiastic who has lost his first wife. The alternative may appear to be, that no one who has, or has had, a plurality of wives at one time, shall be allowed to hold office as a bishop or elder. But we have elected not to take any side of that question. And otherwise excepting the case of incest, there is nothing to indicate that the Apostolic judgment was exercised about any question regarding the right application of the marriage law.

In the absence of Apostolic practice and precept, we observe the general fact of Church history, that the difficulty created by polygamy in a community does not appear to have been found formidable in practice. The “masculine” races are generally monogamic in their practice; so that to a very large extent the original propagandism of the gospel of the kingdom may not have had this difficulty to deal with in real experience. But the universal fact is, that wherever Christianity has gained a community to itself, polygamy is not in existence; and there is usually no trace of there having been any painful violent process of putting it out of existence. The reason appears to be, that the gospel creates *a manner of thinking and feeling* to which polygamy is revolting. And this, again, would result immediately from a clear and full recognition, which the gospel makes inevitable, of the spiritual equality of the sexes. The natural correlate of polygamy in practice, is the Mahommedan doctrine, that women have no souls. Here, at the living heart of human society, we are once more confronted with the fatal fact, which is in the whole heart of heathenism, that *manhood*, the rational being of the human species, is not “honoured,” but is disregarded and effectively set at nought. What we saw in the intimate relationship of service, that is what we now see in the most intimate relations of marriage; and we shall see it extending, as a poison from the fountain, to the parental relationship.

As to the wife, her hopeless degradation into a merely domestic drudge among “savages,” is one of the saddest things in the existing condition of mankind; so that Paul, in his picture of the ideally good husband, Christ in self-sacrificing love to the Church, is a benefactor to humanity. But

the essence, the moral poison, of the degradation, has been widespread as heathenism among the most elaborately "civilised" of mankind. The remaining "honour" to woman which may have had place in the heroic age, was in the historic period among the Hellenic peoples displayed by a feeling and practice toward women resembling the Oriental Zenanaism of our time. Woman was not regarded as being really of the same nature as man. The illustrations from Roman history, of the profound contempt into which womanhood had fallen when the gospel came to "make all things new," are exceedingly painful to contemplate in the practice of a truly "masculine race." The general fact is, that in heathendom woman is not "honoured" as the "weaker vessel," but has the ruinous experience of "the weaker going to the wall."

What thus becomes disclosed in the heathen feeling toward stranger, servant, wife, is a worldly selfishness, or egotistical worldiness, which has the sanction of a law and a philosophy like itself. The fine sayings of the philosophers about man must not blind us to the fact that the man they are thinking of is a full-grown male of a narrow caste; that *humanity*, in our Christian sense of the term, affection of loving esteem toward a *human being* as such, had no place in their thought, as the word had no place in their language. *Home*, in our sense of the term, had no existence and no name. The *non-existence of really domestic affection*, in the true sense, is shown by the heathen *feeling toward children*. In heathen life, as shown in history and literature, children have almost no place. Paul, when he wished to employ a powerful argument, speaking to a Christian, said (1 Cor. vii. 14), "but now they are holy." Christ took them in His arms and blessed them. In Israel they were sealed from infancy as in the covenant of God (*federati*). They joined in the feast of the Passover; and it was to *them* (Ex. xii. 26-28) that through all generations there came the yearly sacramental address from God Himself. In heathendom, *infanticide* has been a familiar practice, especially where the infant is feeble or deformed. Even under the Roman constitution, the child, in minority, was at the father's discretion like a slave, and the feeling was not so much paternal as that of an owner

toward slaves. The highest mind of the heathen world, Plato's, in its ideal of a political constitution, had promiscuous intercourse of the sexes, *in order that* the future citizens might not know their parents, but be educated publicly in common, with an undivided affection toward the state. What sort of man can it be that has not felt *filial* affection of revering tenderness? Heathenism, destroying the family in its living heart, can have only that sort of man. The society into which the Christian wife and family come, is *eo ipso* a regenerate society, with a "new heart."

SEC. 2. *The patience of hope (resurrection and the life everlasting).*

"Patience" is the masculine virtue of "endurance." The gladiators would approach the emperor with a death-song of, *Ave, Cæsar, morituri te salutant!* ("Hail, O Cæsar, we salute thee on the way to die!"). But that was the dirge of hope forlorn, the last breath of a gloomy desperation. The Christians, accepting death from Pliny, could "endure as seeing Him who is invisible." For their hope was beyond the grave. So that, even in dying, they could sing, in the opening words of their own Epistle (1 Pet. i. 3), "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, through the resurrection of Christ Jesus from the dead."

But the song of this hope was not only for some great crisis or agony of life, such as that of dying for the faith. It was, as we have seen, for the ordinary course of life, in its everyday details of commonplace business. Peter has been called the apostle of hope; but no apostle would have been of hope if hope had not been of the religion. So we find this apostle (1 Pet. iii. 15), in his prescription of apology, speaking of the "hope that is in you" as if it had been another name for the religion. Paul, too, when he himself was apologising (Acts xxiii. 6), said that it was for "the hope" that he was called in question, as well as for "the resurrection of the dead." And John (1 John iii. 3) speaks as if hope had been the one great thing that Christians have in

Christ: "He that hath this hope in *Him* purifieth himself, as *He* is pure." Hope is thus of the religion, as love is and as faith is.

Paul (Rom. v. 4) speaks of hope as the work of "experience." And the 2nd Peter (i. 5-11) describes an assurance of hope, apparently as attained by a progress in Christian graces on the foundation of faith. The progress is like that made by one who ascends a mountain through the morning mist, until at last he reaches the summit in clear sunshine. That, however, has reference to the presence or the absence of the feeling, the greater or less degree of clearness of the expectation in the believer's mind. Otherwise, the hope is spoken of as a thing most sure, that "maketh not ashamed." For its locality is not only in the mind of man. Outside of man's mind, it is placed variously, but always where it is most sure, as "the bright and morning star"—thus, for Christians, it is in Christ (1 John iii. 3), in God (1 Pet. i. 21), laid up in heaven (Col. i. 5), and a sure and stedfast soul's anchor that entereth into what is behind the veil.

The hope appears to have been peculiarly bright within believers in times of great outward trials. It may be partly on this account that (1 Pet. i. 7) the trial is "more precious than gold." When Paul speaks (Rom. v. 4) of patience as working experience, and experience hope, what he represents is a sort of experimenting. The trial is the process of experiment, and the hope is the result of it. Hence, where there is most of the "fiery trial" (1 Pet. iv. 12) there is most of the joyful hope. That is to say, *because the religion is true*. If it had been false, the result of the experiment would have been despair, for the falsehood would have appeared; upon testing trial by fire witness the heathen religions, which have perished one by one—they could not bear any real trial.

We saw that in the "fiery trials" of the second century the Christians were found remarkably clear and full in their assurance of hope. Justin Martyr was decided in favour of Christianity by seeing them prepared to die for their religion; and we can hardly think of their being thus prepared to die unless they, as a class, were confident that—*mors janua vitæ*—death were for them the gateway into life. So that confessor, of whom he tells us thanked the magistrate, who

had ordered him off to death, for sending him away from this wicked world, home to the heavenly Father. And the first thing that influenced Justin decisively in favour of this faith was the quiet, solid assurance with which an aged man spoke of the condition of the martyrs in that home where he expected shortly to overtake and rejoin them. In short, this new religion appeared to the heathens even to be distinctively the religion of hope. Witness the Lyonnese persecution. *The hope of resurrection* was the thing on that occasion of battle royal, so savagely assailed by "the philosopher" on the throne, with his dogs and vultures, and the populace insulting with exulting cry, "Where now is their God who was to raise them from the dead?"—as if it were a joyful thing for mankind if in this world only there was hope.

Johnson said at Iona, that whatever carries the mind into the past, the distant, or the future, elevates man on the scale of thinking beings. In that case, the life of those primitive Christians must have been lifted, far above what had been in their world before, by this new light of resurrection that had come to shine into the common place of their lowliness on earth in time. Of the hope, too, as of the love and the faith, Christ was the "all, and in all;" as Peter confessed in the wonderful sentence (1 Pet. i. 8), "Whom unseen, we love; and in whom, unseen, believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." It is by His resurrection that they were brought by a new birth into a living hope of immortality. And the immortality of which they had this confident expectation is not merely a continuance of the individual in distinct personal existence—say, in a painless condition of comfort. It is an abiding at home with a personal God the Father, in fulness of His image and favour, which is true rational creature's life in consummate manifestation; and a corresponding fulness of that which is a rational creature's true and only glorious rest,—service to God, unwearying and unending, "like the stars for ever and ever." Also, and especially, it is a *bodily* immortality, through resurrection from the dead. The body is to be delivered from the conditions of mortal corruptibility into a condition of incorruptible spirituality. It thus is to be a glorious body, meet "mansion" for a completely purified soul. And so the whole nature of the redeemed is to be in

realisation of that hope unto which they here are born again. The whole corporate man shall be for ever "with the Lord;" complete in that manhood before the throne, which is completely (τελέως) in him who is in the midst of the throne.

That hope the Christians have in Christ. The "error," which He saw in the Sadducees (Matt. xxii. 23-33), as appearing in their disbelief of a future life, consisted in their "not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." It is by establishing the truth of the Scriptures in this matter, through showing in His person the power of God, that Christ has "brought life and immortality to light:"—it is not by philosophical reasonings nor by scientific discoveries. God said to Moses, "I am Abraham's God;" thus implying that Abraham was alive at that time, centuries after his death. His word was thus committed to the doctrine, that there is another life for man, distinct from that which he now lives in the flesh. What His word has said, His power can perform. And of this He has given an assuring demonstration in the actual resurrection of Christ Jesus from the dead. That resurrection of the Son of David is not only a miraculous proof (Rom. i. 4) of His being the Son of God. It is not only a great culminating action in the achievement of salvation of lost men; so that His *exodus* ("decease," Luke ix. 31) is (2 Pet. i. 11) for believers an *eisodus* ("entrance") into His everlasting glory. While it is thus a "first-fruits of the dead," it also is, *in the supremely testing case*, a demonstration of *our* immortality. It shows that a real immortality of the whole corporate man awaits every human being through the resurrection of the body. There thus is not a human being in the world that has not the profoundest interest in this matter. For that resurrection of Christ ever says to every one of us, "Know that the Redeemer liveth, and after thy skin hath been destroyed, yet from thy flesh thou shalt see God" (Job xix. 26, Rev. Vers.).

On board an emigrant ship, all that is said and done and thought has reference to the land of promise beyond sea. If the thought and expectation of that land were effaced from the mind of the passengers, it would be as if all their present life were gone, and the vessel were drifting aimless until she somehow sink. The primitive Christians thus had their

present in the future. Without any cheering visitation of angels, they were like the patriarchs in respect of (1 Pet. ii. 11) "confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." The future was their only refuge from the storms of life, to them so dark with storm. Their only stay through time was the anchor of expectation firmly fixed in the throne of the Eternal. When they "in their patience possessed their souls," then the wonderful self-possession of their soul in that "endurance" was a praise to Him on whom they trusted, in the omnipresence of His power and His faithfulness of love. On the other hand, if they had been without hope they would in effect have been without God in the world. Paul (1 Cor. xv.) reasons for the resurrection on that very ground: that apart from resurrection, this religion is foundationless. To him a religion only of the present would be, not a healing of the heart, but a breaking of it: "If in this world only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable."

That blessed hope, which thus was to them as a new true life of heaven on earth, was in substance dead and gone from the heart of mankind. In a manner and measure to which human history shows no parallel, mankind, as to the future, had in that age come to despair of life. From the beginning it had not been so. Mankind have always shown a wistfulness after immortality. And the customs of the peoples are monumental of the fact, that originally there was expectation of bodily resurrection into life. The Indian chief was buried with his bow and spear beside him, in readiness for the Happy Hunting Grounds at the call of the Master of Life. Some were placed in an attitude of readiness to rise, as if in expectant waiting for the call. Where there was cremation, the ashes were preserved, as if the *essence* of the body (cp. "*the ashes* of an heifer"). And of man's reluctance to abandon the hope of life, the mummies in our museums are pathetically eloquent, mute exponents of the feeling of the most ancient of the pagan historic peoples. Still, when the gospel came to mankind with its light of immortality, the world was darkly despairing of life: the hope was a really new thing, as if the dead themselves had risen from the grave.

All that man desires or fears in the future is to his feeling dependent on the continuance of his distinct personal existence,

with a capacity of pleasure or of pain. Death is to him the king of terrors, not only on account of apprehended pain of dying, nor on account of dread of suffering after death, but also, because there is in him by nature a horror of revulsion from the thought of extinction of his being, whether through dissolution into physical nature, or through otherwise lapsing out of conscious personality. Hence there has been on his part a great amount of speculative thought, endeavouring to attain to assurance of immortality. But the speculation has been for him only as an eagle's endeavours to soar without an atmosphere to soar in. "The prince of philosophers," freely interpreted by the greatest speculative genius of antiquity, could attain to only a wistful "Perhaps." So to this hour. There is speculation on the ground that the soul is naturally indestructible: perhaps without sufficient consideration of the question, What can be meant by anything being naturally indestructible that is not God? More impressive to practical reason is the seeming incompleteness of the present life of man,—the career that has only begun, the sentence that remains half unspoken, the account that is left unsettled, seem to call for a future life in completion of the present; regarding which a dialogue of Plato shall read like the discourse on final judgment in Matt. xxv. Still, there has not been the real and solid expectation of that future.

The religion of the Egyptians appears to have been much occupied with the thought of it; perhaps with an exclusiveness of dwelling on the future that was fatal to true life, by taking the heart of reality out of the present. The "swarms" of missionaries which Irenæus sent among the Celts may have found among the Druids the only professional *theologians* to be met in the ministry of pagan religion—a strongly emphasised doctrine of the soul's immortality—which, however, was imperilled by metempsychosis. But relatively to a real immortality of the man, the grand difficulty which must have risen before men's minds as soon as they began to reflect, was *the seeming absurdity of a resurrection of the body*; the reappearance, in immortal life, of that which may have been devoured by flames or by wild beasts; or, at least, what has passed through wasting toil and languishing age, and painful dissolution, into loathsome

corruption. When Paul preached at Athens (Acts xvii.), the people began to mock him upon his reaching that point of what they deemed the incredible absurdity of the resurrection of the dead. And philosophy was not able to help them into a real belief. There might be Platonisers with a faint surviving echo of the Socratic "Perhaps." Those who had come to the front "of the Epicureans and of the Stoics," were helpless in their sworn symbols of arrogant imbecility, deaf-mutes at the funeral of the hope of mankind. So to this hour, effectively, philosophy is dumb. A philosopher, with his hesitating "perhaps," what is the use of him at a death-bed, or at any really trying time of human life? What man has need of was perceived by the heathen Saxon chief, who pleaded for a hearing to Christian missionaries on the ground that our life is as a bird's flight across the lighted hall, from darkness into darkness; and that we ought to welcome any one who can throw light upon the darkness from which we come, or that into which we are going.

At Athens the people mock at Paul's preaching of the resurrection. At Lyons and Vienne the people will mock at the martyrs dying in the hope of it. And this they have learned, not from the philosophers only, but before that from their own hearts ("their foolish heart was darkened"); as represented, for instance, by those poets who are the "prophets" (Tit. i. 12) of the peoples—the really great poets, like Homer, who have a heart for the people's religion. He is "the Bible of the Greeks," and we may look at Virgil as a "Bible of the Latins." They express the people's best thoughts about religion. And, as the picture of man which they have drawn is in the heroic age, when men had barely begun to reflect, we may expect to find them placing in that age a something of a solid hope of life to the man. But, in fact, the hope of resurrection is gone, even in their heroic age. In that age of theirs it was imagined that in the unseen world the heroes are in blessedness, on meadows of asphodel. But *they*—the heroes—are not there. For they are not *in the body*. They are only "shades." Though they should be sons of the immortal gods, they have no reality of existence; no existence that is not shadowy, phantastic, unreal. Homer

strangely says, that they have not sense (*φρένες*); that is, we will suppose, they have not *homely* "mother wit." They are non-human, homeless ghosts.

The expectation of such an existence, unreal because not corporeal, was not a joyful hope. It was not fitted to be even in the present life a light on man's path, or music in men's march through time. The philosophers might place the departed in some blessed island of the West, in the true home of the sun. The truer instinct of the peoples, and of their poets, placed the dead as *inferi* ("underground"). Even the heroes, in that unreality of life, were not regarded as being or feeling at home. They were wistful, if not regretful, not to say fretful, in recollection of the "jocund" true light of the open heaven above ground. The melancholy thus occasioned at the heart of heathenism was further darkened by a *dread* of the unseen, which makes the *guilty* to be in fear of evil tidings. And it is not wonderful that the peoples, in whom the wish was thus coming to be as father to thought, when they began to reflect, saw an incredible absurdity in the belief of resurrection of the body. The future had thus come to be to them without a substance. For the remaining shadow they soon ceased to care. While continuing to be haunted with uneasy apprehensions, they either lived without any earnest thought about such matters, or strove to harden themselves against the thought, with the sullen or the jovial desperation of a "Let us eat or drink, for to-morrow we die."

The one memorable endeavour to obtain in real thought a solid ground of hope in relation to the future life, is invested with a special interest from the impressive contrast of the parting utterances of Christ in John xiii.—xvii. It would be almost profane to institute a formal comparison of these utterances with Plato's *Phædo*, or of Socrates with Christ. The often-quoted saying of Rousseau, that Socrates died like a philosopher, but Jesus like a God, may represent a theological doctrine of which the speaker was not thinking. In the apparent intention of the saying, it has a flavour of eulogistic eloquence, which, perhaps, is more irreverent than Thomas thrusting his hand into the pierced side. But it is not irreverent to look at some external resemblances which

deepen the feeling of contrast between the wise man and the man who is God.

In both cases the teacher is about to die under an unjust sentence of worldly power, and is surrounded by his chosen friends and disciples, prostrate in the grief of approaching separation, but receiving his last words, which he delivers with the calmness of a master addressing a school. And on both occasions the great matter brought into view was *the life*, real and eternal, of a man, as depending on his relations to God and the unseen world. But when we pass into the reality of things as they were on the two occasions respectively, then the son of Sophroniscus is so different from the Son of Mary, so markedly and strongly contrasted with Him, that we well may wonder and pause upon the suggestion as to the Galilean rustic, that "surely this was the Son of God." Socrates in his own mind has not real assurance of immortality. He is not sure even that he knows God, believing that it is very difficult for any one to know Him, while it is impossible to make Him known to others. He is not sure what is to happen to Socrates. He is willing to try, like one who ventures out alone in a frail boat upon shoreless dark ocean which he knows not. So he leaves them with a sad patient smile—a wistful "perhaps"—and no real assurance of seeing them in any future life.

His disciple, by whom these things were recorded, is known as "the divine," on account of the sublimity of his own speculations. The evangelist who has recorded the parting discourses of Christ is sublime in thought as Plato was. But he has no speculation of his own. The reason why *he* is named the divine (theologian, *θεολόγος*), is that he most vividly apprehends the Godhead of Christ; His soul is a mirror, in which Christ appears "manifesting His own glory" (John ii. 11; cp. i. 14). And in his representation what appears in the parting utterances of Christ is not the wistful "perhaps" of a good man who does not know, but *the life* itself, that life which is the light of men; so that there never more shall be darkness of doubt as to the reality of life eternal to be attained through man's being rightly placed in relation to the unseen world. That life he sees in Christ (1 John i. 1–3): "the life was manifested." The manifestation

of that, so that men may perceive and embrace it, is the one great thing which he sees in Christ, the incarnation of God, who is Light and who is Love. And in the record which he gives of those parting utterances of Christ, the thing which we perceive as filling the whole with a sunlight of joyful hope is the *assured reality* of that life in the mediation of Immanuel, and the covenanted faithfulness of sovereign love in God the Father.

So Christ Himself, in the Sacrament of the Supper, made the commemoration of His death to be an anticipation of His second coming, to be to them and in them that life in its fulness which now He is for them when He goes to the Father. That life they are even now receiving in part, which is an earnest and pledge as well as foretaste of its coming fulness. The second coming was in that first age so vividly real to Christian apprehension, that some of the early converts had (2 Thess.) to be corrected for having overlooked what has to be done and undergone in the present before the manifestation of that glory which is to be revealed. About the nature and extent of the millenarianism, which had place in the mind of the primitive Church, as it has place in the mind of the real Church of all times, the dogmatic affirmation of men echoing one another, is far in excess of the real information that has reached us. But the opinions as to the second advent, in respect of which the mind of Christians has been a divided mind, are only as the spots on a sun, of unanimous assured confidence in the certainty of a bodily resurrection, and so of a completely real (τελέως) immortality of the man. And that sun of the manifested life is constituted to them by the word of God and the resurrection of Christ. On its brightness, ever since He parted from them, there never has been the shadow of a doubt. It is an article of their *Credo* (1 John iii. 3); and they have the same certainty of that personal immortality of the whole corporate man, as they have of the resurrection and of the miraculous conception of Christ.

This makes a new creation. The present life is wholly changed for the man who comes to a serious belief in reality of life that shall never end. And not only Christians are born again to that lively hope. Even to those who have

not the assurance, life is made a different thing by the supposed possibility of its continuation in the eternal world. For mankind there was a new career begun when the joyful hope was heard of; as when the winter is over and past, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land.

In the joyful hope, resurrection of the body is apprehended as essential, indispensably necessary to *reality* of the future life. It is abstractly conceivable that a human soul should be eternally a disembodied spirit. It seems inconceivable that a human being should be so. And to the apprehension of mankind, and in the nature of things, it appears that, if the body were not to be alive in that future, then in that future there would not be a real (τελεῶς) immortality for the man. Apparently the nature of things is called to witness by the Apostle Paul in the remarkable passage (Rom. viii. 19, etc.) in which he speaks of "the whole creation" as entering into that feeling, which is confessed even by Christians, who have in their own persons a gladsome experience of new creation when they groan within themselves, "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." The "adoption" here is (υἱοθεσία) "son-making," adoption of children, the only "adoption" spoken of in the New Testament (which, *e.g.*, has no "adoption" of *citizens*). And in the case of those who already have in them the first-fruits of the Spirit, the adoption that remains to be effected, redemption of the body, must be the *home-taking* of the sons, completed realisation of what at first was made theirs by law, now making it theirs in fact—the heir coming home and entering upon full possession. In the apostolic representation, physical nature appears as if longing for the resurrection of man's body; as if the "times were out of joint," and Nature herself were incomplete if short of that completeness of glorious manifestation of the sonship of her lord. In the Eleusinian mystery, Ceres mourns on account of Proserpine, her daughter, stolen away by death. The natural human feeling, that manhood is incomplete without the body, would make mournful the prospect of a bodiless future even though the feeling were illusory. But in fact the feeling is not illusory. It is true to reality in the nature of things. "A true body" as well as "a reasonable soul" was requisite for the completed reality of

manhood in the person of Christ. And mankind are not mistaken in the feeling that for manhood in a future life, ghostliness or bodilessness would be unreality, like that of the Homeric "shades."

But bodily resurrection, thus requisite in order to reality of future life, has an aspect of incredible absurdity, which caused the serious expectation of immortality to die out of the heart of the peoples when they began to reflect; so that Athens, in her worn-out old age of pagan speculation, might have had "No future life" as a companion inscription along with "To the unknown God" upon her altar, where Pausanias saw it after it had so moved the heart of Paul. The doleful feeling of despair of life for man in the future was contained in that cry, "*Great Pan is dead*," which at this time was heard, in a manner so strangely startling, by Western civilisation from the Egyptian land of mystery. And Christianity, with its gospel of complete redemption, everywhere found among the thoughtful of mankind that one great obstacle to belief was the seeming absurdity of that bodily resurrection, which nevertheless the peoples had believed in from their infancy, as if the belief had been an innate idea of humanity. Thus Athenagoras, an Athenian philosopher, who writes an apology for Christianity, publishes a distinct *Oration* on the resurrection. And he and other apologists show, by the tenor of their argumentation, that resurrection constituted the grand theoretical objection among thoughtful men to reception of the gospel.

The reception of the doctrine, so that it would become Christian, among men who had settled into the opinion of its incredible absurdity, is thus itself an indication of the presence in, or along with, the gospel of some new extra-mundane power to rule the thoughts of men, as "the wind bloweth where it listeth." And the impression thus made, of there being something superhuman in the new revelation of immortality, is corroborated by the observation that some of the ablest of the apologists were unable to handle this new and strange matter without aberrations, though the apostles, when it was yet more new and strange, had handled it with the resolute clearness of a skilful veteran pilot in a storm. Two of these aberrations we may look at, in the persons of

the two prince apologists, Tertullian and Justin Martyr, as illustrating both the difficulty of the subject and the wisdom of the apostles.

Tertullian went to an extreme in the direction of *reality of the body*. He made body to be everywhere and everything; so that *every* spirit must have some sort of body, not even excepting the Spirit who is Supreme. Tertullian, who had not clear solidity of judgment in proportion to his fiery force of genius, was natively fanciful and prone to speculation, for which he was not naturally qualified. He plunged with confidence into speculation about this subject, which was not for a Roman lawyer, and was beyond even the subtle speculative genius of the schools of Greece. And to that extreme of asserting that everything real has body, he was impelled by the ardour of his conflict (*Against Marcion, On the Resurrection of the Flesh, On the Flesh of Christ*) with Gnostic speculation to the effect that the body of Christ was unreal, which would make His sufferings to be illusory; while this, again, would make His redemption to be unreal or phantasmal. To that extreme which makes body to be unreal, the proper antidote is not the opposite extreme of making everything to be corporeal, but the finding of the primitive Church, upon mature consideration of the teaching of the apostles and the nature of the gospel fact in question:—the finding, namely, of the complete *reality* of Immanuel's manhood in body as well as soul; such that He is "consubstantial with us in respect of manhood," as He is "consubstantial with the Father in respect of Godhead." It is in that reality of the body of Christ that we see the pledge of a bodily resurrection for all men.

Syrian Justin Martyr had in him the Greek genius for speculation, perhaps not completely brought under discipline of the school of Christ. His Platonism of that time may have inclined him towards spiritualising matter out of reality, where a Tertullian would lean toward materialising spirit. One passage of Justin is famous as a battle-ground in the controversies regarding *ubiquitarianism*, physical omnipresence of the body of Christ. The passage in itself may be interesting as an illustration of the then condition of the writer's mind. Theologically it is not of any importance. For Justin has no

special claim to be regarded as an authority in theological questions, even though he should have carefully studied them; and the very fact of their being a controversy about the meaning of the passage might suffice to show that the ubiquitarian question, as agitating later generations, was not so much as distinctly present to "the martyr's" mind. But "the evil which men do lives after them," though it should be only in an unguarded word. A sort of Neo-Platonic ubiquitarianism which effectively makes unreal the manhood of Christ it is difficult to avoid in speculation, if men will be "wise beyond what is written:"—as may have been felt by many who, in their study of the subject of the presence of Christ in the sacrament, have been exercised with the side-question, What mystification here has clouded and entangled the eagle soul of Calvin?

Here, too, the antidote is simply the *reality* of the body. But even in the hearing of Paul—the *doctor resolutissimus* of Christendom—there was heard the cavilling question of difficulty (1 Cor. xv. 35), "*How* are the dead raised? And with what body do they come? ("what sort of body?" *quali*, *ποίῳ*). Paul begins his answer, to this question about the *manner* of resurrection, by saying, "Thou fool." And Christ began His answer to the Sadducees, questioning the *fact* of resurrection, by saying, "Ye do err." We are thus reminded of *docta inscitia*, docile diffidence, as a condition of meetness for obtaining knowledge. The body is so familiar to us, that we easily imagine we know everything about it. Thus a sceptical Christian minister, in a company of really scientific men, showed off his "liberality"—giving away what was in his trust to *keep*—by speaking of it as matter of course, that antediluvians *could* not live seven hundred years. The real men of science said, that *they* did not *know* that as matter of fact: that nothing was known to them of the physical constitution of man to prevent the duration of his life from being ten times what it happens to be as known to us at present.

We may "err" in this matter by supposing that it is *necessary* that we should understand it. The farmer, who buries his corn in the earth, does not need to *understand how* it is possible for the corn to rise in a new life; for the

working purpose of his husbandry, it suffices that he knows *the fact*. So our practical religious interest in the resurrection of the body, our assurance of the completed reality of manhood in a future life, is perhaps exhaustively provided for in the demonstration constituted by the bodily resurrection of the man Christ Jesus. And Paul perhaps has a moral censure, as well as a figure of his fervid rhetoric, in "Thou fool." For the cavilling question he is dealing with proceeds upon the far from wise, the arrogant assumption, that this thing must needs be impossible if *we* do not understand; and yet there is in fact a thing very like it, which we are completely unable to understand, taking place every year, as if silently shaming us with preaching resurrection, before our eyes.

The analogy of a "seed" of grain was afterwards employed by the Apologists in their endeavour to overcome the heathen prepossession against the resurrection on the ground of its ostensible absurdity:—the seeming impossibility of a future life eternal to that body, which waxes old, and decays, and dies, and dissolves into nothing, before our eyes. The Apologist reasoned, that the same process is to be seen when a seed is buried in the earth; which nevertheless rises into a new life from that very process of utter dissolution. The same analogy had been employed by Christ (John xii. 20, etc.) on the memorable occasion of His coming into contact with the Gentile curiosity of "Greeks" (*Ἕλληνες*, *Ἑλληνισταί*, "Grecians"). We might be tempted, by ascertainments of recent science, to speculate about the nature of body; to the effect, not only that every species of body is distinct from all other species, even in the elementary particles which go to the composition of it, but that every individual body is in the essence of it a ("dynamical") *monad* of corporate existence, which is in its nature indestructible and unchangeable, and which will remain the same through all conceivable changes, whether in time or in eternity. But we are warned by "Thou fool," and forbear from speculation where we do not see.

The apostle bids us, in the history of the corn-seed, see not only the fact of resurrection following death, but also a continued *identity* of the new body, flourishing in life, with

that body which has perished in its grave. And he lays emphasis on its being *the same* body (1 Cor. xv. 31, etc.). It may be clothed in new forms, as God shall please; but in essential substance it is the same identical body; as the grain which is reaped is the grain that was sown. The human bodily identity has to be *individual*; *Job's* body, and not that of Eliphaz or Bildad;—in order that it may be the same man, Job, who from his flesh sees God, as from a tent one sees the sunshine, “filling all in all.” On the other hand, the corn that is raised is not the *individual* grain that was sowed; though the *life* which reappears is the life which was in that individual seed, and in no other. But that subtlety goes beyond the point of Paul's argument. The question is not about the individual, but about the species (*ποῶν*), the “*kind* of body.” There is the real difficulty. The *kind* of thing, a body coming into life after death has dissolved it apparently into nothing, that, surely, is impossible: is it not?

Paul has no interest in denying that the thing is impossible. Christ said to the Sadducees, not, “the thing is possible,” but “God is powerful;”—so that He can do this thing though it should be impossible naturally. And what we see in the seed-corn is, that the *kind* of thing, involved in a resurrection of man's body, is so far in keeping with the ordinary proceedings of the all-wise as well as all-powerful Creator, that it would be arrogant folly on our part to reject the doctrine of resurrection as absurd. The subject of the possibilities of bodily immortality is wrought out, with great felicity and power of safe original speculation, by Isaac Taylor in his *Physical Theory of another Life*; which has illustration of contrast in a crude Neo-Platonic speculation which made an impression some years ago (*The Unseen Universe*). But in our present inquiry, we are not called to wander beyond the fact of “the resurrection of the body” as involved in the Christian revelation of “the life everlasting.”

Every one sees and feels that a serious belief in this fact, entering a mind where it was not before, is fitted to change the whole life; as the whole life is changed on board a ship, if, where the vessel was supposed to be drifting aimless until it sink, it now come to be believed that the vessel, like that

which carried Paul, is being guided and carried surely to a destination fixed by God. Paul told the mocking Athenians that the certainty of a *judgment* of all men according to their works is established by the resurrection of the Son of man; and those who even see only that coming judgment in His resurrection have a great change made in their inward roots of life by the sight; as criminals are under power of the known fact that the ship is bearing them to deserved punishment. But the main intended aspect of the resurrection is the sunlight of the joy of hope which it has for those who (1 Pet. i. 21) through Christ "believe in God, who raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory; that their faith and hope might be in God." That hope, without which man's present life is an aimless drifting in the dark, had perished from the world. There is nothing to sustain it as a living power in the world's wisdom. That which restored it, and now sustains it, is the word of God, established in the resurrection of Christ.

SEC. 3. *The threefold apostolic cord (Peter, Paul, and John).*

While in the second century Christ is "all, and in all," a peculiar place is occupied by the apostles; which has to be considered by us, if we will form a correct view of the Christianity of that century. And the place and office of the apostles, as appearing in the Christianity of the second century, is of especial importance relatively to Apologetics. Though Mohammed had been a myth, the Califs are historically real. Paul is not more mythical than Martin Luther. His "adamantine" Epistles are authentic history as truly as are Cæsar's *Commentaries*, or Luther's *Thesis* and *Servum Arbitrium*. And, irrespectively of their own writings, "the apostles" have in the history of second century Christianity a place and office as distinctly defined as any constellation in the system of the stars. Not only so, their place and office are unique in that religion, so that Paul and "the twelve" were distinct from everything else in the universe, as were the moon and the eleven stars in youthful Joseph's dream. And their appearance has been a solitary thing in the history of this religion. In all the centuries following, there never has been

anything that bore the least resemblance to that constellation, of Paul and the twelve; nor was there anything really like them in the preceding history of the revelation, from the time of Abel downwards. "Moses and the prophets" are as markedly different from them as ancient civilisation is from modern, or as the Old Testament is from the New.

In general history, too, of that period, they have an abiding place, as distinct as that of the twelve Cæsars upon the imperial throne. The possibility of there being some confusion or mistake about this or that one of the Cæsars, does not in the least invalidate the general historical fact represented by the description of the twelve; namely, the fact that Roman Imperialism passed into command of the world in the person of Augustus. And similarly, the appearance of the group of twelve apostles along with Paul, in its unique distinctness, in the history of the second-century Christianity, is itself a monumental proof, which is entitled to be carefully weighed as independent proof, of the historical reality of what is presupposed in the existence of them; namely, the appearance upon earth of a Divine Redeemer in the form of man, whose commissioners they were to the whole world of mankind. When we come to inquire into the details of gospel history, and may naturally find obscurities in the remoteness of that dawning, we shall do well to remember that here, in the second century, clear and distinct as the Cæsars of Suetonius or the planets of our solar system, is that group of the apostles; which cannot pass from history, or from the memory of the race, as the stars must keep their places till the appointed course of time be run.

We speak of them as a group or constellation. They are not only many, but one, so that a second-century Christian could speak of "the apostle" as we speak of "the psalmist." But "the apostle" is not a mere unit, but a unity. The question whether *Diatessaron*, as title of Tatian's *Harmony*, implies that the number of the Gospel histories was four, does not affect us at the present point. Here we need only to see the general fact, that there was a unity or agreement of the apostles in respect of a something which they had in common; as the planets all are one, in respect of all receiving of the fulness (John i. 16) of a central luminary, so that all

the planets are apostles of the sun. And thus far there is not any possibility of doubt on any ground pretending to be in a real sense historical. The extremest of unbelieving critics, if he know anything about the matter, will admit that "the apostle" of second-century tradition represents a harmony of Christian belief, a unity in the variety, which (unity) is represented—say—by the doctrinal symbol of that century, known as the *Apostles' Creed*. And the variety in the unity greatly multiplies the cogency of the historical proof that is constituted by the existence of "the apostle," so distinctly definite in significance, in the tradition of that early time. When the sun is out of view, the planets bear him witness; and the testimony of eleven stars is a million times more powerful than the testimony of one. In order to make a reasonable beginning of denying the authenticity of the gospel history of salvation, it is necessary to dissolve the twelve apostles, and Paul with his Epistles "adamantine," into nebulous matter or vapour; and such a "milky way" has not yet begun to be formed. The fact is, that their strictly historical place and office, about which Christians have never had really any doubt, cannot now be questioned by an unbeliever without forfeiture of claim to be regarded as a scholar who has real knowledge of these matters.

It is convenient to take the three names of Peter, Paul, and John as representing the whole number of the apostles. In any considerable group, there is always a nucleus of typical representative persons; as Peter, James, and John sustain that part in the original twelve companions of the ministry of Christ. The office of an apostle, though very great, was simple,—witness-bearing (Acts i. 21, 22) as to facts in that ministry, attested (2 Cor. xii. 12) by miracle. For such witness-bearing, we do not know that there was call for any transcendent originality, or puissant individuality, such as leaves a separate mark in history. And Peter, Paul, and John were, in the second-century tradition, the individual apostles held distinctly in memory; so that these three fall to be regarded as having been, to the apprehension of the primitive Church, a fairly adequate representation of the whole apostolic order. We can see that in fact they represent the three connected stages of apostolic Christianity: 1. Of the

Jerusalem Church of the circumcision; 2. Of the extension of God's kingdom among the Gentiles; and 3. Of consolidation around the imperial throne of Christ. And it is notable how very completely the substance of the New Testament Scriptures, and even of the New Testament Scripture history, is immediately connected with these three persons. Paul alone, between the Acts and his Epistles, occupies in the New Testament history an amount of space not much less than is filled by the earthly ministry of Christ. Matthew's is the only Gospel that can be reckoned as fairly independent of the three. And in the apostolic writings there is nothing that is clearly distinct from authorship of the three but the two minor Epistles of James and Jude.

These three, again, constitute a harmony within themselves. It is perhaps not a fanciful analogy that has associated their respective names with the three Christian graces:—Peter being made the Apostle of Hope; and ("adamantine") Paul, of Faith; and John, of Love. It is more important to note the fact, that as faith, hope, and charity all combine in the formation of one completely rounded Christian character, so the three apostles all are really one in the representation which they give of Christ. It is impossible to deny this. Accordingly, the unbelieving critics do not attempt to deny it. On the contrary, they confess it, in the very foundation of their assault upon the historical truth of Christianity. The foundation of that laborious assault, in connection with which so many reputations have been made and lost during the middle period of the present century, has been the supposition that Paulinism of doctrine, regarding free salvation for all, and the glory of Christ as Immanuel Redeemer, had in the first century attained to a complete ascendancy; such that the forgers of the second century, in their concoction of the New Testament Scriptures, had to make them all conformable to the Pauline type of doctrine. In point of fact, then, the New Testament Scriptures *are* conformable to that type; and the Peter and John of second-century tradition were of that type; that is, they held the Pauline gospel of a Christ who is divinely glorious, and a salvation that is free to all, to be received simply as a gift. That which the unbelievers have as the basis of their whole assault, is all that

we want at the present stage. It is an acknowledgment of the fact that the second-century "apostle" was, in the judgment of the Christians of that century, a harmony of the whole apostolic order, represented by the now received evangelical doctrine of the glorious person and saving office of Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Upon that supposition, the natural and obvious conclusion is that in fact the three apostles, and the whole choir of their order, did in common hold that faith of Christ. That they did so, has been the opinion of Christendom from that day to this; for there never has been a Christendom that would not subscribe to the Apostles' Creed. And that they did so, is of course what is to be concluded from the teaching of the New Testament Scriptures—which, according to the critics, were forged for the very purpose of teaching *that*. But the critics have learned, from Hegel, Epicurus, or other such authorities, that the second-century Christians only *dreamed* that the apostles had originally been all of that one mind; or that individuals in the second century *invented* the story of an original apostolic harmony; and that, accordingly, the New Testament Scriptures were written by inspiration of that invention or that dream.

In support of this wonderful view of what took place, there is not a particle of historical evidence. It is contradicted by all the really historical evidence in existence. But at present we are looking only at the three great historical personages, three shining pillars, conspicuous in the front of that second century. The theory of a second-century forgery, for the purpose of concealing an original disagreement among the apostles, proceeds upon the view that the second-century Christians *believed* that in the first century the apostles had first disagreed in their doctrines, but had come to an agreement, upon the footing of the original apostles abandoning the doctrine of Christ, in order to embrace a new doctrine of Paul. Now, in point of fact, the second-century Christians *did not* believe that. On the contrary, they believed that the apostles were holy men of God, who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. That this is the view which the second-century Christians took of the character and teaching of the apostles, is a mere historical matter of fact. And this

mere historical matter of fact, that the second-century Christians regarded the apostles as teachers from God, utterly destroys the supposition that they invented a false apostolic history, and forged Scriptures for the purpose of supporting their fraud.

But may they not have innocently *dreamed* it? Dreamed *what*? That the apostles were originally all of one mind? Then who has dreamed that the apostles had first held opposite doctrines, and then that twelve out of thirteen of them began to teach a doctrine which they did not believe, and abandoned the doctrine they had from God? That is not an innocent dream. It would be a shame to dream it, even for an individual infidel in a high fever. And the innocent dream of an original unity of apostolic doctrine did not write the histories of the ministry of Christ and the apostolic Acts, with the apostolic letters, of Paul and others. Here at least there could be no dreaming; but—if that original unity was not a fact—there must have been deliberate, infamous falsification of history and sacred literature,—falsification in which the whole Christian Church of that age must have participated. But here, again, the theory is a pure invention, contradictory of all we know about the character of that Church.

Suppose, however, that the second-century Christians dreamed that innocent dream, and that consequently there somehow came into existence the infamy of a forged New Testament literature. The process of dissolving the apostles into *nebulae* is only beginning to begin. *What really were* the apostles in their own first century? Were they honest men, telling truly what they had learned from Christ? If they were, there is no need of supposing such hallucination and trickery as has been ascribed to the second-century Christians. For the whole matter is quite well explained, simply by supposing that the second-century Christians really did receive from the first century those writings which they profess to have inherited as apostolic Scriptures. But then, that would reduce historical critics to the necessity, like ordinary persons, of believing the testimony of history, that Christ worked miracles, and rose from the dead, and claimed to be the Saviour Son of God. Accordingly we have to consider the view, that the apostles, to a man, were—*deceivers*.

According to Matthew (xxiv. 24), Peter on Olivet heard Christ predicting, almost with His dying breath, that there were to come false prophets and false Christs, who should *deceive*, if it were possible, the very elect. Paul (2 Thess. ii. 9, 10), in almost the first of his letters, emitted a warning prophecy of a "*deceivableness of unrighteousness*," working ruin to them that perish, the work of a wicked one, the man of sin, the son of perdition. And John, in the awful vision of his Apocalypse, has one (xiii. 14, 15) of a second Beast, who, for his purpose of brutish and destructive tyranny over souls of men, should deceive the peoples of the earth. We are now invited, by way of explanation of the original history of Christianity, to believe that the apostles themselves were all deceivers. And, if we will identify them further with *these* deceivers, regarding whom the solemn warnings were emitted by Christ and Paul and John, we have this further mark, that the Beast of the Apocalypse, and Paul's man of sin, and the false prophets and Christs of Christ Jesus, were to be workers of *miracles* on behalf of their deception; while it is notorious that the apostles professed to work miracles in attestation of their testimony:—the "signs of an apostle" were "signs, and mighty works, and wonders."

Deceiver was the one character which, upon the view we are invited to accept, the apostles had in common. They differed in their original doctrines, but they settled into agreement of deceiving. The first of the deceivers was Paul. He somehow imagined that on the way to Damascus he saw the risen and glorified Christ, and from Him received a commission to be His apostle to all nations. Whereupon Paul, with immense enthusiasm and corresponding success, gave his whole life to *contradicting* the gospel of Christ, in the two fundamental articles of the person of Christ and of the way of salvation in His name. Paul preached a Christ who is God-man, and a salvation that is free for Jew and Gentile, simply from the grace of God the Redeemer. But the real original gospel, which the twelve had received from Christ Himself, was, that He is only a human Reformer, that salvation is to be on condition of our works of the law, and that it is for Gentiles only on condition of their becoming Jews by circumcision. And the original apostles, excepting Judas,

became deceivers by abandoning their original gospel of Christ and accepting that contradiction of Paul. He and they, having agreed upon this deceit, established in the world a Paulinism, under the name of Christianity, which was fundamentally and essentially different from the Christianity of Christ. And the New Testament Scriptures were, somehow, concocted for the purpose of concealment of that fraud.

The true destructive criticism of that theory is, simply, statement of it. As soon as it is understood, it will be disbelieved, wherever there are honest men in possession of their senses. Already it is going the way of all such flesh. But yesterday, the reputation of it filled the world. Now, excepting among unbelievers half a generation behind the time, there is hardly one so poor as do it reverence. But it is well to utilise it as an illustration; as the bodies of malefactors are employed for demonstrations of anatomy in public schools of science. It is useless to ask any man whether Peter and Paul and John were deceivers, after the fashion which the theory requires. A man who can regard them as vulgar impostors, conspiring to mislead mankind with a parcel of lies about religion, is not to be reasoned with, but to be pitied. When a theory has once reached that point, it is destroyed.

Coming back to the point of these three world-historical personages representing the apostolic order, we will not now anticipate the details of the argument upon the ground of their testimony, which will fall to be considered under the head of external evidence, of the apostolic age. We resume consideration of the significant value of their harmony, as being several agreeing in one. By force of circumstances, as well as of genius and character, and in the destination of Providence, Paul is the central "apostle:" *the one* who is meant when only one is meant. He is a wonderful harmony in himself. His apostolical career is so completely in keeping with the singularly picturesque variety of his personal character and experience, that the whole record of his ministry, even his most elaborate theological disquisition, is replete with an ever fresh living interest of biography. And the very strange event which occasioned his conversion is the only thing in the world that would account for that career and that personal experience; so that all the life of Paul is a proof of the historical reality

of the miracle of the Damascus appearance. But his truthfulness as a witness is engaged, and is our guarantee, not only with reference to that one point, but with reference to the whole system of the gospel and its administration by him. If Paul was an honest man, he received the gospel in a revelation from God in Christ. And when it comes to be a question of Paul's honesty, the case is closed; for it is impossible to doubt his honesty. Thus Paul, or Paulinism, though standing alone, would be really complete as a proof of this revelation.

But Paul cannot be studied by us without our coming into view of Peter, as representing the original apostles. For the great Pauline movement bears everywhere the traces of that earlier movement, centring in Jerusalem, of which Peter was the foremost leader. Although that part of the New Testament which speaks directly of his work should be destroyed, the Pauline Scriptures would make it necessary for us to *imagine* a work, substantially of the character which we find in the earlier part of the Acts, done either through Peter, or some other person or persons. The attempts to discredit that part of the history are thus futile as well as irrational. Peter is really a great historical character, and a distinct monumental evidence of the truth of Christianity.

Here we recapitulate, at the cost of repetition. These three men are known to us as real historical personages, as authentically as Tiberius, and Nero, and Augustus Cæsar. Their historical place and testimony would suffice for our inquiry independently of all questions about authenticity and genuineness of New Testament Scripture. But we have in our possession the actual Scriptures of the men themselves. About 1st Peter there never has been a shadow of reasonable doubt: the shadow of unreasonable doubt that has been raised by atheistic prepossession, is on a ground which really corroborates the evidence of genuineness,—namely, that this Peter's doctrine coincides with Paul's. There never has been a shadow of reasonable doubt as to 1st John: which exhibits the same doctrine, of the divine glory of the person of Christ, which has given occasion to the shadows of unreasonable doubt as to the authenticity of the fourth Gospel. And as a distinct and independent source of evidence we have the Epistles of Paul. The four of these, whose genuineness is acknowledged as

unquestionable by unbelievers, contain all the information required by us at present; namely, as to the belief of Christians in the resurrection of Christ, His divine glory of person and office, the free salvation offered to all men by His grace through faith simply, and the new life unto God which is lived by that faith. These Epistles also show that the doctrine of Paul is that which from the beginning has been taught by the apostles as from Christ. As we read them, we are at home in the middle of the second century with "the apostles, elders, and brethren."

As to the authenticity of the Acts, we are not under pressure of necessity to inquire. That beautiful and noble history of a supremely great movement has been questioned on internal grounds, which we will find occasion to consider: a primary motive to the destructive criticism having again been an atheistic prepossession, which made it desirable to destroy the credit of that history, as a monumental evidence of the fact, that there never was any reality of doctrinal disagreement between Paul and the original apostles. A very different result has come out of the searching examination of the inward relation of the Acts to the Pauline Epistles in Paley's *Horæ Pauline*. The result has been, disclosure of a multitude of "undesigned coincidences" of the history with the letters, such as to constitute a real demonstration of the authenticity and thorough trustworthiness of both. That places us in clear view of the whole of our second period of thirty-three years, that of the planting of the Church in the world, the central period of primeval Christianity. But at the present stage of our inquiry, it is important to observe that we really are independent of that. We do not need at this stage, nor, in truth, at any stage, to debate about the authenticity of the Acts. The book is of the very highest value. But though it had not existed, a fair knowledge of the history and state of Christianity in that period, sufficing for our purpose, can be obtained from those four unquestioned and unquestionable Epistles of Paul.

John must have always stood alone, even in the life time of other apostles, and in the earlier period of discipleship: "his spirit was a star, and dwelt apart." The authorship of the Apocalypse and the fourth Gospel can be considered to

greater advantage in other connections. At present perhaps it may be suitable to regard him as representing what is confessed by mankind in the expression "the *holy* apostles." The impression, of pure and lofty moral character, which the apostolic order has made upon mankind, is ineffaceably distinct. Their purity and truthfulness have never been seriously doubted by rational creatures who have known anything about them. Their miracles are a seal of God upon their testimony. But there is a seal of God upon their foreheads. The last survivor of them is only their foreman when he says, "That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you." And he and they will be believed so long as there is in the world a capacity of appreciation of simple purity and truth.

BOOK II.

THE EXTERNAL EVIDENCE.



PRELUSION:

THE CONDITION OF MIND FOR JUDGMENT IN THIS CASE
(AGNOSTICISM).

A SCOTTISH judge, the late Lord Gifford, was asked whether those "interlocutors," reasoned judicial utterances which in complicated cases of fact and law appear to us the quintessence of brain-power at high pressure, do not cost the author of them a killing strain of night labour in the preparation of them. He answered, No: his own deliverances were frequently written before he left the precincts of the court; after witnesses are examined, and able counsel have spoken on both sides, the matter is found to have taken shape in the judge's mind, so that the deliverance flows from his pen without consciousness of effort.

The *judicial faculty* no doubt is strengthened by much exercise and comprehensive knowledge, and a disciplined strength of intellect which is not given to all. But what *makes* the judicial faculty, as distinguished from the forensic, is what the judge has in common, not with the learned counsel, but with the juryman. It may exist in high degree where there is neither special training nor uncommon ability or attainments. It is what is called "sense,"—plain straightforward vision of the thing as it really is in fact. It ranges in degree from the instinct of a bee to the intuition of an archangel; and in the lowest degree it may be perfect of its kind. Lord Cockburn, looking round Bonaly with the man in charge, and observing that in the stormy weather the sheep kept on the exposed side of the hill, said, that if he were a sheep he would keep on the sheltered side. "If your lordship," said Saunders, "*war* a sheep, you would have mair sense."

Sheep are good judges of pasture, too, and know the shepherd's voice; and babes are discerners of milk, where wise

and prudent men have been known to make mistakes. The judicial faculty in our present question is not far from him who really wishes to know what is right and to do it. Only, the true judge comes to a *decision*. The man who comes to no decision, but halts between two opinions, may be forensically dexterous and eloquent; but he is not a judge, with the judicial faculty of "sense" in lively exercise.

The value, as well as the need, of that "sense," appears even in connection with our external perception of common things. The vague Agnosticism, relatively to the highest matters, which under that name now fills the air, is not a new thing. It is a sceptical condition of mind, anciently called Pyrrhonism, which has place in a mind that has begun to reflect upon things, so as to be able to see that there are questions about them, but has not been able to see a way to an answer, and has despaired of an answer. So the melancholy poet in the *Rejected Addresses*, who was given to stealthy admiration of "the scholar's melancholy" in the looking-glass, saw, not without a sense of glowing grandeur in himself, that "nought is everything, and everything is nought."

This Pyrrhonism of professed incapacity to come to a conclusion is ordinarily found in association with a want of real earnestness, of serious wishfulness and endeavour to come to a practical conclusion, especially about the highest things; while, perhaps, there is a dim presentiment that a practical conclusion would carry with it a distinctly manifested call to self-denial and self-sacrifice, giving up all things for the sake of one which is the highest, and alone is good. And there may be, along with the absence of that desire for moral truth, which Christ spoke of as "a willingness" or "wishfulness to serve God" (John vii. 17), a certain self-admiration and self-pity, with an impression that this desolation of the sceptic is a very fine thing, which marks him as a decidedly superior person. The original type of it, as a vain-glorious sentimental unbelieving Pharisaism, in our new time, was Rousseau, whose head was among the stars, "at his own wonders wondering," and who was held in admiration as one, sublime in lonely sorrow, whose "spirit was a star, and dwelt apart;" but whose heart was of the temper of that other

sentimental genius who "wept over a dead ass, and neglected a living mother." In Germany it ran into the extreme of "the sorrows of Werther;" and the Wertherism ran into such excesses of lunatic hobbledohoyism, or diseased self-conscious juvenility running amuck, that it had to be dealt with by the police.

The "sense," or gift of vision, which is a power of decision, or faculty of conclusion, in matters of real importance, may thus at bottom be a *moral* character, of the true heart finding truth, as "unto the upright there ariseth the light in the darkness." And the infirmity of intellectual indecision may correspondingly be traceable to a root of worldliness or selfishness which, excepting in such fruit, does not appear—roots do not show themselves as a "root of bitterness," springing up to defile. To fasten such an imputation in particular cases might be a breach of charity, as when in the case of one born blind it was asked, "Who hath sinned, this man or his parents?" But in the present case the blindness is rampantly aggressive. Agnosticism is prescribing itself as the right normal condition for all. At least by implication, it forbids the hope of knowing truth, and questions the legitimacy, if not the honesty, even of professing to know truth. And this may impose on some who now believe, as it has imposed on many who do not believe, to very grievous ill effect, relatively to that highest interest which was in view of Him who promised, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." It therefore seems only right, on behalf of that great catholic human interest, distinctly to protest against the assumption that ignorance is freedom, that blindness is not infirmity, that the true office of human reason is to come to no conclusion; as if it had been a blessed promise, "Ye shall not know the truth, and ignorance shall make you free."

It is strictly necessary, on behalf of the public right of reason to be honoured among mankind, to maintain unflinchingly, that indecision is infirmity, a weakness that is a symptom of disease of the mind; as resolute clear decision is the natural outcome of a vigorous health of judgment.

The simple "sense" of a mind that is truly sane has a right of self-vindication, founded in its real perception of the

truth: as moonshine has to give way to the sovereign right of sunshine. It was not difficult for David Hume, who published sceptical reasonings against Christianity for the amusement of the learned world, while privately professing not to be personally an unbeliever, to indulge the same humour, at the cost of the happiness of mankind, by reasoning on behalf of universal scepticism, doubting everything, disputing the competency of all that man calls knowledge, denying the trustworthiness of even the evidence of our bodily senses. Hume himself, when writing history, or otherwise in earnest, might speak of that as "a philosophical delirium." But he did not mention this in his *Essay on Miracles*. And many of those who are influenced by the reasonings—for the amusement of the learned—of the essay to the conclusion that human testimony is incompetent for proof of Lazarus being risen from the dead, may not have it present to their mind, that the same sceptic has an argument on behalf of the conclusion that the testimony of the bodily senses of Mary and Martha was not trustworthy when they saw and heard their brother in his previous life. Reid, in Scotland, reasoned out the matter as against this scepticism on behalf of "common sense." Kant, in Germany, took the same side in intention, and in effect more profoundly, though—as Jacobi, "the German Plato," showed—less wisely. But a vague indecision can always find a theoretical justification for itself; and the justification may be welcome to those who really do not love daylight of truth, but instinctively prefer the moonshine to the sunshine.

Thus, as to the competency of human testimony. It is easy to make out a case in justification of scepticism on that ground; since, to a proverb, hearing is not evidence, and common rumour is a common liar. And yet plain healthful sense can find a solid way of truth in testimony. Almost all the knowledge on which we proceed in reality of life, with full unquestioning confidence, is by us derived from hearsay, or testimony of other men. Hume has his knowledge of the past only from historians. He knows the distant only from report of travellers. And for the most completely unquestioned facts of physical science, the great mass even of philosophers are dependent on the specialists, who relatively

to those facts have made the observations and experiments, interrogating nature, on behalf of mankind.

The fact is, that honest men know honest men, and believe them, taking their testimony as equivalent to direct personal observation of the fact. And if the secular historian, traveller, expert witness, is trusted, relatively to matters of fact which they were qualified to observe and to report upon, while Peter, James, and John are not trusted when they tell us what *they* have seen and heard, the Agnosticism, which thus is partial, must have in the root-cause of it some specialty of connection with *the religion* of Peter, James, and John. If that be so, then let the specialty of the religion, on account of which honest men are not to be believed when they state plain facts, be pointed out. The belief, for example, that God was in Christ,—does that make a man blind, so that he cannot see Christ, if Christ be risen from the dead, and show Himself alive after His passion through forty days by many infallible proofs? The belief that Jesus is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,—does that disqualify Galilean fishermen to use their bodily senses, so as to make them unable to distinguish things that differ, and to know whether the water of Cana was turned into wine, or whether Jesus died upon the Cross? If this be contended, then the contention at bottom is, that the bodily senses are partisans, so that the eye, which clearly sees in other cases, is blind in this.

Perhaps it will serve a purpose here to do a little scepticism ourselves, relatively to the trustworthiness of the bodily senses in external perception. (See pp. 328–330.) A very large part of our exercise of judgment—whatever the subject on which we form an opinion—is without a distinct consciousness of the processes involved in it. Thus we read without spelling, and the pianist is not conscious of the distinct throbs of multitudinous nimbleness of fingers. Berkeley's bewilderment was occasioned by a fact which is continually in the history of our mental action without our being aware of it; namely, that in external perception what appears to us immediately intuitive cognition, say, of the distance and magnitude of a tree, really is the result of a complicated process of judgment,—a process of which the

subtle celerity baffled and bamboozled the keen intelligence, not only of a wordling like Hume, but of that bishop to whom poetry ascribed "every virtue under heaven." That vision, which appears to us an inborn immediateness of knowledge, really was learned by us in our infancy through an elaborate educational process—now forgotten, though more fundamentally vital in importance—for keeping us from stumbling into pits like philosophers—than all our prize learning of schools and universities. And now, in every act of perception there has to be somehow in effect that process which, under discipline of Dame Nature, we learned in that prehistoric infant school (cp. 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2), but of which we are no more aware than the harper is aware of his manipulation of the strings. And who will assure us, that into that primæval education there did not enter some fatal flaw, now vitiating all our judgments of external perception,—not only our vision of Lazarus raised from the dead, but our vision of him before he died, when he went up and down the Bethany street like his neighbours! Nothing in the world but "sense." Let Reid, and Kant, and Plato give us all the help—or hindrance—that they may, the determining *thing*, on which depends our legitimate assurance of the validity of our knowledge of what we see and hear and handle, is simply "sense."

So in relation to religion. Every opinion of ours, every passing shade of thought or feeling, may be the result of a process which has been through all our life; as the stream, in its latest throb of transition into the sea, is under an impulsion extending *from* its ultimate fountain in the solitary hills. Those *obiter dicta* of the mind, ostensibly superficial as the swallows which "dip their wings and fly away," or as the passing shadows on a statue, may be occasional manifestations of what is really deepest in our life:—such as carnality of orthodox theologising in a Nicodemus patronising Christ, or carnality of religion in the Jews rejecting the Messiah. The questions of religion are in the air. The agitations reach our mind. And we are exercised about the great matter more or less consciously—perhaps less, rather than more. We are labouring or drifting toward an opinion; holding some opinion with a tension of mind like the highly complicated

process of standing still. And by that process we are being made, or unmade, for all our duration. So the controversies of the time are not only reflected, but enacted, in every soul. And in our condition of imperfect knowledge of clouded light, where only one way can be right and the thousand ways we hear of may all be wrong, the judicial faculty, the "sense," that instinct for reality or truth which is the one only condition of our judging rightly, is thus to be most highly prized, as life is dear.

But it has to be *in exercise* ; for "he that seeketh findeth." And it has to be exercised with an open soul of candour, or "fairness," which admits the light: looking the matter straight in the face in order to *see* it as it is. He who looks only on one side, in order to *show* the matter as it ought to be, may be seeking to save his neighbour's soul; but he is on the way to lose his own. For he is forming in his mind a forensic habit, which is fatal to the judicial faculty.

Now, ungodliness is a practical judgment, that there is no God. But what is expressed in this judgment is, not that reason which is of the constitution of man's nature, but an irreligious condition of that nature. Religion has been defined as feeling of dependence. Where the feeling is not, there cannot be practical knowledge of God; as there can be no external perception where there is not, in lively exercise, the optic nerve of vision. Hence, if a man have not that feeling of independence which is at the root of all religion, he is necessarily agnostic relatively to Deity; as a man is colour blind in whom the optic nerve is torpid or dead. And if he cannot know God, of course he cannot know whether God was in Christ. Here, then, comes in a further condition of the knowledge. Suppose, for argument's sake, that the purpose of Incarnation was redemption. Then, as Tholuck reasons, in order to qualification for judging, there has to be a sense of sin, a feeling of the need of redemption. What, then, if there be wanting even that elementary knowledge of ourselves which always carries in its bosom a sense of sin. How *can* the seeker come to know whether God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them? "Show me thy man," said Theophilus

of Antioch, "and I will show thee my God." In Heb. ii. 10 it is said that the redemption of lost men through the expiatory suffering of Immanuel was *the distinctively Godlike work* of the All-worker. (On this, pp. 422-424.) Butler, in his *Analogy*, will show that the Bible religion is, even in its difficulties, *in keeping* with what may be ascertained from the system of things regarding the Ruler of the universe and the Creator of man. And the primitive Apologists will refute the heathen religions, by showing that these are *not* in keeping with that which may be known or divined as to Deity, from the system of nature, the rational constitution of man, and the moral judgments and conscience of mankind. But still, the "it became Him for whom are all things and by whom are all things,"—it was Godlike, *the distinctively Godlike work of God*—this criticism of *Hebrews* appeals to a sense of the Godlike in us. If the sense be not in us, the appeal must needs be in vain; as Christ said, "How can ye believe, who seek honour one of another?"

Mankind as a race are not Agnostic relatively even to religion. To a large extent there is among men that feeling of dependence which qualifies to know God. And among them there are many in whom there is, besides, either a distinct sense of sin, or more vaguely, a feeling, which we describe as a feeling of the need of redemption,—that to which Christ addresses Himself in the grand invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Natives of India are found, through widespread influence of a non-ethical philosophy, without any real sense of sin. They listen to the gospel story with a certain interest, as a "representation," which they call *moya*, and which is by them regarded as not having in it any reality (or unreality), but simply passing before their mind's view like a reverie or day-dream. But from among these Agnostics, this and that one are found detaching themselves, and giving themselves over to the faith of Christ. At first they have no clear knowledge of sin, any more than if the conscience had not been in their mental constitution. That knowledge comes later, as if they had to travel back from Calvary to Sinai (as indeed all men have, in a sense, for by grace comes the knowledge of the law, Ex. xx. 2). What first attracted

them to Christ was an aspect in Him of bringing what they felt a need of "rest unto their souls." They must, however, have in some way, though dimly, divined that this in Him was Godlike. Unless there is some rudimentary preparation for that perception, it seems vain to toil at the search regarding Christ. Even a *creative* word has to be apprehended as divine when the creative work is new creation of a soul. So as to evidence. Evidence is a means of *showing* that a thing is (*e-videri*). But the evidence may be so much of the same character as the thing, that one, who is incapable of forming a conception of the nature of the thing, shall on the same account be incapable of any just appreciation of the significance of the evidence. Thus as to miracles. Suppose that Hume thinks of miracles as mere eccentricities of God, like the freak of an irrational creature, then he may naturally think within himself that no testimony will ever make him believe in such a thing as *that*. And while formally he is reasoning, that no testimony can establish *any* miracle, he may really (though not distinctly aware of this) be inspired simply by the conviction that the First Cause of the universe cannot do anything immoral or absurd. But the miracle may really be in its character a gracious work of healing mercy, *in a manner*, or of an aspect, that is *Godlike* (John ii. 11 ; cp. i. 14). The man who sees that is not likely to be much moved by Hume's argument, to the effect that Peter, James, and John cannot be believed if they say that they saw Lazarus alive to-day ; any more than he would be influenced by Hume's *other* argument, to the effect that Mary and Martha cannot be believed if they say that they saw Lazarus alive six days ago.

Then the question about the *style* or character of the miracle may depend upon its *connection* with the "work" of this person as a whole. Restoring a lame man, for instance, to the use of his limbs, may, to one who does not know what is the whole "work of Christ, have a look of interfering with the medical profession, by unfair competition of some uncommonly great natural gift of healing. But if the whole "work" be the distinctively Godlike work of redemption through Immanuel's obedience unto death, so that "with His stripes we are healed," this or that particular "work" of

healing comes to have a wholly changed aspect, to be transfigured into a "manifestation" (John ii. 11) of the glory of Jesus as the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. But always there has to be in us—the requisite "sense"—some capability of perceiving what is Godlike in manifestation; for if "the light shine in darkness, the darkness comprehendeth it not."

To say that God cannot be known by us, is to say that mankind as a whole have been mistaken about that matter. Mankind as a whole have been of opinion that He *can* be known by us. And to say that it cannot be known by us that God was in Christ, is to say that Christendom is mistaken as to this matter; inasmuch as Christians of all ages and lands have been of opinion that it *can* be known that God was in Christ. But the Agnostic, who certainly has the courage of his convictions, ought not to be blamed simply for thinking that the rest of mankind may have been mistaken. It suffices to request him, besides, to consider—as Cromwell entreated the Presbyterian ministers to consider—that *he* may be mistaken. That is the least that can be requested of one who thinks it certain that the rest of mankind are mistaken. If the rest are mistaken, then surely he *can* be, for he does not claim to be an infallible Christ. And if it is possible, or conceivable, in his own estimation that he should be mistaken, he ought now with us to inquire as to the evidence.

It might be maintained that in fact he certainly is mistaken. To affirm that nothing can be known, is to be certainly mistaken; because if it be known that nothing can be known, then something is known; that is, it is known that nothing can be known. We will not say that Agnosticism is presumptuous in contradicting the rest of mankind. We will say that it contradicts itself. So as to knowledge of God. The Agnostic knows about God, that nothing can be known about Him. That is, he knows something about one about whom no one can know anything. How often has this ancient criticism of scepticism, on the score of its incoherent dogmatism, to be repeated? Probably in every generation, until all humanity have something of the *logos sporadikos* called "sense." In the meantime, we do not reproach Agnosticism for contradicting the rest of mankind

who think about religious matters. We only, since it contradicts itself with reference to the possibility of knowing about God, hope that the Agnostic shall perceive the fact of his being mistaken as to this matter. And if it be possible that man should know something about God, we are in a position of competency to receive evidence on the question, whether God was in Christ. We can, indeed, receive the evidence in any case.

The man who says that it is not possible to know anything about God, contradicts Christ and the apostles and the prophets; for they all profess to know something about God, and to be able to communicate that knowledge to us, so as to make us wise unto salvation. And that man also contradicts Christ and the apostles and the prophets who says that it is impossible to prove the doctrines of a religion by miracle; for they all profess to prove the Bible doctrine, what the Bible says about God, by miracle, either of work or of word. Are we under necessity to contradict them? Have we ascertained infallibly that they do not prove their doctrine by miracle? Have we attained to an infallible certainty, that they have not so spoken and acted as to bind us to believe, and make unbelief a sin? The position of Agnosticism, as patronising non-belief, in contradiction of Christ and the apostles and the prophets, is not without boldness. But the question is as to truth.

The internal evidence is in its nature unassailable by secular criticism; as the New Jerusalem cannot be reached by the artillery of earth. The man who lives in the open air does not mind about Hume or Berkeley. He who says, "Once I was blind, now I see," cannot be answered. But he may be mistaken. And we now will consider only the external evidence which can be produced in open court of the world's judgment, and be tested there.

In Eph. ii. 20, Jesus Christ Himself is "the chief cornerstone." The Gospel history of His earthly ministry is the citadel of Apologetic defence. But there may be defence apart from the citadel — by means of the city walls. The apostles are the twelve foundations of the walls of New

Jerusalem. A distinct evidence of the truth of Christianity is alleged on the ground of what is found in the Apologetic Age:—a Christendom which is proof of the divine mission and person and work of Christ. Finally, though the city wall should be demolished, the city may by situation be strongly defensible, a natural fortress. The evidence of the truth and divinity of Christianity from the Old Testament has a distinct interest as well as a distinct value.

If divinity appear in any part of the system, it belongs to the whole. If God spoke to Abraham, He is speaking to us through the apostles. If Christ rose from the dead, Enoch is in heaven as well as Elias. The *cumulative* effect of evidence arising from so many distinct though connected sources, may in our case so counterbalance the weakening effect of distance. Distance does not make the object of knowledge less real; a man is as real at the distance of a mile as at the distance of a yard. But the distance affects the impression made on our mind. The “fallacy of distance,” in occasioning a feeling of unreality, is counterbalanced by the advantage of our position, in being able to see the convergence of so many lights of the Gospel History, the Apostolic Age, and the Old Testament system of Mosaism and Prophecy. But the light, in order to its due effect, has to be fairly received into the mind.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHIEF CORNER-STONE.

THE two Christian festivals represent the Redeemer's career under the two aspects of it which (1 Cor. xv. 1-8) were put in evidence by Paul before the heathens at Corinth, A.D. 54. The resurrection of Christ, represented by the Lord's day, is reserved by us for consideration in the following chapter (2nd), in connection with the history and memorials of the Apostolic Age. In the present chapter we shall consider, from our Apologetic point of view, the ministry of Christ in His humiliation unto death, commemorated in the sacramental feast of the Supper. We will accept the Gospel histories as correctly representing the career thus indicated in the substance of it; and will not occupy ourselves with expiscation of details, except in so far as that exercise may appear to be called for in the interest of our present inquiry.

SEC. 1. (*Introductory*): *Of Incarnation.*

The appropriate subject of the Apostolic testimony regarding the life of Jesus is (Acts i. 21, 22) His earthly ministry, from the baptism of John to the ascension from Olivet. Matthew and Luke give some details of His personal history, especially in connection with His infancy and His birth. And they give each a genealogy exhibiting His human descent in the line of David:—Matthew thus tracing Him back to Abraham, “the father of them which believe;” and Luke, to that first man, “which,” he says, “was the Son of God.” Another species of Sonship is assigned to Him in John's prologue (John i. 1-14), in which we may see a commentary on the testimony of the Baptist, who, on occasion of the baptism of Jesus (John i. 33, 34), “saw, and bare record,

that this is the Son of God." That testimony implies that in the Sonship of Jesus there is something unique. What the thing is, appears in the continuation of John's prologue (John i. 18); namely, a generation, which is unique in the universe; so that, though God have many sons, Christ alone is "begotten" of that Father; and in that sense is "the Son," "the only Son," of God. This is explained by what is set forth in the first words of the prologue (vv. 1-3), namely, that Christ is God, the eternal Word who in the incarnation (ver. 14) became man, and dwelt among men, full of grace and truth, so that they beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father.

It is understood that John's Gospel is especially intended to bring into view the Godhead of Christ; while the Synop- tists are occupied with the detailed facts in the history of His life in human form on earth. The Catholic theology sees an essential distinction between a sonship like that of Adam, which he receives by creation, and the Sonship of Christ, which He has by generation: the one brought into being in time by the will of God; the other, existing externally (*φύσει οὐ χάριτι*) by necessity of the divine nature. Upon this view He, who by incarnation became the Son of man, is by generation the eternal Son of God, one in substance with the Father, His equal in power and glory. The manner of the appearance of His Deity in the Gospels may be illustrated by His proper name of *Immanuel*, "God with us." In all the Gospels the *El* (God) is really found *Immanu* (with us). But in the first three Gospels what is placed on the foreground is the *Immanu*, His dwelling among us (John i. 14) in our nature; while in the fourth Gospel (cp. John ii. 11) there is brought into prominent clearness of distinctness the fact that He who here dwells among us is *El*—true God (John xx. 31).

1. *As to the manhood* of Christ. The point made by the ancient Church in her *τελεώς*, "*perfect man*," was the *completeness* of His human nature; such, for instance, that He had a *human mind*, like ours, as well as body. But the main point of Christian doctrine regarding His manhood is its *reality*: such, for instance, that He has "*a true body*," and not a merely phantasmal appearance of body. Hence the great expression, *homöousion*, "*consubstantial*," was applied

to His humanity as well as to His Deity: He is "consubstantial with us in respect of manhood," as well as "consubstantial with the Father in respect of Godhead." (His manhood is really complete, as His Godhead is completely real.)

In the Gospel histories we see the *complete reality*, or real completeness of that manhood. This is implied in the descriptions, "the Word was made *flesh*," and "the Christ hath come in *the flesh*." And it appears in all the life of Jesus, in His death and in His resurrection (meetly followed by the representation of Him as our sympathetic High Priest). In the Pauline theology (excepting, say, Eph. ii. 11; Rom. i. 3) "flesh" means, not simply the nature of manhood, but a depraved condition of that nature as it is in fallen men;—"corrupt nature," or "corruption of nature." In the Johannine theology (excepting, say, John iii. 6, i. 13) it means simply human nature; so that John's expression, "the Word was made flesh," corresponds to the Pauline descriptions, "made of a woman," "being found in fashion as a man," "He took not on Him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham."

The description of manhood as "flesh"—*denominatio fit a majori*—brings into view (cp. "red-skin," or "Black") the *specialty* of man among rational beings; He (Rom. xii. 1) is *corporeal* in condition (as well as terrestrial in location). When man is described as being "flesh" in respect even of his spiritual constitution (1 Pet. i. 24, 25, and Isa. xl., as referred to by Peter), we are reminded of a *frailty*, incidental to the human condition of mortality on earth in time, with a life amenable to the ebbs and flows of all things in this passing world (1 Cor. xv. 40–50). While in John iii. 6 and viii. 15 Christ Himself appears to use the word in a Pauline sense, as implying depravity of nature, He elsewhere (John vi. 51; cp. Matt. xxvi. 26) employs it in the Johannine sense to affirm (with a distinctness involving emphasis) the *reality* of His manhood wearing our nature so as to share our lot (though sinlessly, Heb. iv. 15; cp. John viii. 46). The name "Son of man" (in Daniel, and in Ezekiel more than seventy times), which He takes to Himself, appears to involve, besides, a claim to headship of humanity (1 Cor. xv. 45; cp. Mark ii. 28). The title "Son of David" (cp. Acts ii. 30; Rom. i. 3, 4) has reference to His royalty as the Messiah.

The reality of His manhood as being in a true body is

shown by His growing in stature, and by His hungering, becoming weary, dying, rising from the dead. And the Gospel history declares not less decisively that He had in Him "a reasonable soul" of manhood, or veritable human mind; it is decisively against the view that the place of this in His person was filled by, say, the *Logos*, which He is eternally, or by the *Holy Ghost*, which dwelt in Him as the Christ in time. His *complete* reality of manhood thus includes a human *reason*: such that He *grew* in wisdom, and (Matt. xiii. 32) there was a thing which *He did not know*. Limitation in respect of knowledge does not imply imperfection of a human reason: nor does it involve liability to error in the teaching of one who speaks by inspiration of God (John vii. 16), and who in His person is truly (*ἀληθῶς*) God as well as completely man.

How there can be in Him as man a limitation of knowledge, while He is omniscient as God, we cannot comprehend: as in all respects we are unable to comprehend how a person who is true God can be really man. This paradox ("strange thing") in the mysterious fact of incarnation (1 Tim. iii. 16) is peculiarly marked in connection with *the will* of Christ. Being "completely" (*τελεῶς*) man, He has (Luke xxii. 42) a human will, distinct from the divine will (which is in Him). But how can there be *two wills* in one person? We are acquainted only with cases in which personality and will are numerically one; and we think it is impossible that it should in any case be otherwise. But when we come to the divine Trinity we have to "forsake" that "thought." For in the Trinity, while there are three Persons, all divine, there is only one will of God (who "was in Christ"). The speculative difficulty of our inability to comprehend the matter is quite insurmountable. But there is no need of surmounting it. "Paradoxes," mysterious facts, are found in all our life: and practical reason accepts the fact, notwithstanding the mystery. In the present case, of incarnation, the absence of paradox would have made the fact suspected justly. The Gospel history does not show that men were exercised in their minds about the difficulty in comprehending the mysterious fact. Perhaps *they* did not try to comprehend it, but were satisfied with knowing and believing it (Luke i. 4).

Reality of manhood enabled the Son of God to be "tempted

in all points like as we are." It made Him to share with us in our "sinless infirmities;" so that now He is capable of sympathy with us in our sufferings, or can be touched with "a fellow-feeling of our infirmities." But His miraculous conception (Luke i. 35), through which He is placed out of the line of descent from the first Adam by ordinary generation, made Him free from the inheritance of sin. And while it thus was possible for Him, as for Adam when created in God's image, not to sin (*posse non peccare*), the measureless indwelling of the Holy Spirit in Him, and the constitution of His person as God-man, made Him to be *impeccable*, incapable of sinning (*non posse peccare*).

In the Middle Ages, when men were very active in speculation, there was much discussion of the speculative question, Whether there would not have been an incarnation though there had not been a fall: *An Deus incarnasset si homo non peccasset?* (Aquinas, *Summa Theologiæ*.) The speculation has been revived in our time, in a sort of new scholasticism of theological thinking. The suggestion of an incarnation apart from need of redemption is historically associated with a feeble sense of the reality and magnitude of that need, as calling for incarnation even upon the principle, *Nec Deus intersit*, etc. ("Call not for God to come where man can do the work"). Thus Müller, author of the great work on *The Christian Doctrine of Sin*, who at first held the view that God would have become man though man had not fallen, was led to abandon it when he came to have a full sense of the transcendental evil of sin. The speculation, from what we know of its historical connections, may appear to be of kin to a pantheistic view of the constitution of the universe, according to which "God" first comes into attainment of conscious being in man, and really *has* that being only in man (whose own being is only in appearance,—as a bubble on the wave). And, in particular, it seems to militate against the Christian doctrine of Christ's person both as God and as man.

On the one hand—as to His Godhead—the speculation makes God so to be incomplete *in Himself*, as to have need of manhood for that completeness which He has not in Himself; and thus incarnation would be, as it were, God seeking to save Himself from being lost through incompleteness. On the

other hand, the speculation makes the manhood of Immanuel to be incomplete without incarnation; and thus the first Adam would be not complete as a man, but only at the first stage on the way to manhood's full formation. This, again, would make the trial of man under the first covenant to have been unfair, and consequently his fall to have been a mere calamity (*Prometheus Vincitus*) instead of being a ruin through sin. Also and especially, it would make *the manhood which Christ assumed* to have been imperfect—that is, the manhood which is ours irrespectively of the fall; so that incarnation would have been God's being made an *imperfect man*; and it would have been an imperfect manhood of which He says, "Take eat, this is my body, broken for you," "My flesh is meat indeed."

The Catholic Church, in her doctrine of the purpose of incarnation, has not expressly condemned the view that there may be some purpose which would have called for it irrespectively of man's fall. But she has said simply that God became man "for our salvation" (*δι' ἡμέτεραν σωτηρίαν*). And the Gospel history, showing Immanuel as simply engaged in a work of salvation, is thus a commentary on His proper name of Jesus as expounded by His Father, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins."

That speculation may remind us of the fact that incarnation, though we find it involving paradoxes, is in substance not itself a "strange thing" to the mind of men. On the contrary, it seems to be associated very generally with men's earnest thought regarding Deity. Voltaire said that "propitiation is the fundamental fact in all religions." We may say that some sort of Immanuelism has been a commonplace of the religions, and even has had roots in the philosophies, of the peoples. The Immanuelism has been of two types, which may be described as respectively Oriental and Occidental. In the Oriental, the tendency is to come down from the divine to the human; and the human tends to be lost in the divine, so that the ostensible incarnation shall in reality be only a sort of naturalistic theophany—an impersonal deity shining though a manhood which it employs as a mask, or revealing veil. In the Occidental, on the other hand, the tendency is

to go up from the human to the divine, so that the divine shall be lost in the human, the ostensible incarnation being in reality only a deification of man, perhaps retaining a human personality; perhaps at the cost of at the same time retaining impure human passions:—"pollutions" of heathenism being thus made inevitable at the fountain, in so far as the devotee is in the image of his deity. The Orientalism, on the other hand, which results in obscuration of personality and free moral agency, is found to be in effect demoralising as being at heart a naturalism, like that "of the Epicureans and of the Stoics," along with a sort of "holy water" sprinkling of religion which does not sanctify. The heathen realisations of the idea of incarnation have thus been at best illusory. But the very failures to apprehend the matter have shown that the idea itself, of Immanuelism, of union of the divine and human natures through incarnation, is native to mankind in its practical thought regarding attainment of true life for man in fellowship with God. Thus far the Christ of Gospel history, as an historical realisation of that idea, in a true personal union of the two natures, divine and human, in which their distinctness is not lost, but conserved, is "the desire of all nations."

The expression, "desire of all nations," may be construed as meaning *deliciæ* of the peoples, that which is visibly desirable to man as man, realising his native ideas of what is good for him. And one of the resources of Christian apologetic is in showing, from the religions of heathenism, that in Christ there is a true realisation of what are catholic human ideas of good to be sought by man in fellowship with God (cp. Ps. iv. 6). (The subject was wrought out by Archbishop Trench in his Hulsean Lectures on *The Unconscious Prophecies of Heathenism*, with sub-title, "Christ the desire of all nations.")

It may be shown that the fundamental catholic doctrines of the unity of God, a plurality of divine persons, incarnation of Deity, redemption of man through vicarious suffering of God incarnate, and even regeneration of mankind through diffusive influence of a new spirit of life, have, though in a confused, broken way, ideas corresponding to them in the catholic heart of humanity. This goes further than "Show me thy man, and I will show thee my God;" as when Calvin

enlarges on the importance, for preparation to know God, of our knowing ourselves. It speaks of a knowledge of God that in a real historical sense is "in" mankind. And it might be a profitable exercise to take the representation of Christ as "the fulness" of Godhead bodily, as set forth in catholic theology, and compare the Christ of historical Christianity with the heathen conceptions of divine excellence, embodied in the various names and forms of Polytheism:—the result might be to find that in the Bible Christ there are combined, in one glorious fulness of grace and truth, in a true divine-human personality, what those broken conceptions (cp. *logos sporadikos*) of Deity represent:—the omnipresent potency of Jove, with possibilities of thunder and lightnings in his bosom; the radiant nobleness of golden-haired Apollo, fountain of light and life and health; the loveliness of Aphrodité, rising from sea-foam, with beautiful flower-spangled mantle of green; and even the resistless force and fury of *Arēs*, *Arēs brotoloigos*, the war-god (Ex. xv. 3). But for the present it suffices to note, in the spontaneous utterances of mankind as religious, so many *testimonia animæ naturaliter Christianæ*, monumental evidences of the fact that rejection of supernaturalism as such, even if the supernaturalism rise to the supreme of incarnation, implies a deadness to the feeling, a blindness to the view, an apostasy from the faith, of catholic humanity, which longs for that very thing, "as the hart panteth after the water-brooks."

The history of religious thought in Israel, as bearing on the idea of incarnation, is impressively significant in comparison, and especially in contrast with the relative state and course of thought represented by the heathen religions. On the one hand, (1) notwithstanding their vivid realisation of God's intimate presence among them, as "dwelling" in the tabernacle or temple, *the Israelites never once imagined that God had come among them as a man*; much less did they ever dream of deifying any one of their heroes most near to God—Abraham, Moses, Elijah. It never once occurred to them that a creature could rise into Godhead. On the contrary, their feeling, on those rare occasions on which they *supposed* that God had shown Himself to them under the appearance of an angel, was wholly different from the feeling that would have been occasioned by the thought of His "taking upon Him the

nature of angels," — a thought which an Israelite could no more take into his mind than he could think of God as ceasing to exist. *The Hebrew conception of the divine transcendence* is no doubt what occasioned that which is so striking a feature in Israel's history, namely, a complete absence, from the life of a people so ready to lapse into idolatry, of all appearance of a disposition or tendency to idolising their own heroic saints; as heroic saints are idolised now by many who otherwise are ostensibly Christian in their faith, and as heroic saints or heroes, far from saintly, have filled the pantheons of heathenism. But, on the other hand, (2) while thus markedly excluding the thought even of the possibility of an incarnation in the past, the Israelites may be said to have been (cp. Isa. xi. 3, etc.), from the first dawning of their existence, long ages before they were organised into a nation, *preparing*, in mind and heart, *for incarnation as the great event of the future*.

Jehovah, "the Coming One," had from the beginning (cp. pp. 73-75) been indicating *the direction and manner* of His ever future coming, so as to keep His people's mind and heart expecting, more and more precisely, what now at last has come "in the fulness of the times." Always there was *mediation*, whether of angels or of Moses, to the effect of making God a dweller among men as if tabernacling in their camp. The mediation, first through angelophanies, was *human* in form, and thereafter came to be and remained human in fact. The human mediator was, in course of the revelation, seen to be a *prophet*, a *priest*, a *king*; and in all this, a righteous yet suffering servant of the Lord. And along with that progressive defining of His office, there went on a gradual adumbration of His person. Sometimes there were glimpses of the coming man as God (upon the throne); sometimes, glimpses of the coming God as man (in the furnace). And, long before Daniel had noted those glimpses, the great evangelical prophet had articulated the very name "Immanuel" — God - with - us (Isa. vii. 14). We need not now debate the historical question, whether *the Jewish Rabbis* had in their dogmas come to recognise the Godhead of the Messiah before the coming of Christ; *they* certainly did not recognise it, and Isaiah (Isa. vi. 9) had not expected that they should recognise it, *at* His coming. The question with us at present is only as to a preparedness of *the religious Hebrew mind* (of the Old Testament "Israelite seed") for a Messiah who should be God-man (Heb. i. 1). And the fact of that preparedness is sufficiently shown by *the rise of the New Testament Immanuelism in the bosom of the Old Testament Church*, as represented by Jesus and the twelve, and Paul and those others, who certainly were the flower of the religious Hebraism of their momentous period.

Here, then, the *à priori* objection to the miracles of Gospel history, on the ground *that miracle is contrary to human experience*, so as to be antecedently improbable, in a degree amounting to moral impossibility, is counterbalanced by the prevalent opinion of religious humanity, that *incarnation is to be expected* in order that man may have life in fellowship with God. The objector may not believe that God is merciful, so as to be likely to provide for man a way of life in that fellowship. The only thing that would make the miracle antecedently improbable is *mercilessness of God*. And belief in mercilessness of God is not a conclusion from man's experience of there not being miracles in ordinary occurrence.

The *à priori* objection, on the ground *that miracles are impossible*, because there is no supernatural, has no special relevancy to the Gospel history nor to the Christian religion. It tells also and equally against all religion. And it tells also and equally against all morality, and all history and biography, in so far as these involve the supposition of any *free agency* of man. The mere naturalism, whether "of the Epicureans" or "of the Stoics," whether Atomistic or Pantheistic, which here and now appears as a critic of Gospel history, is incompatible with recognition of any such thing as moral agency, or even—as in the imagined case of the fairies—free agency without moral quality. It allows to man an intelligence like a calculating machine. But in its very essence it excludes from his constitution and life, not only the moral element represented by conscience, but the "ethical" element of mere will. It thus reduces him into a sort of intelligent animalism. We are not under obligation, at every point of Gospel history, to debate anew that old philosophy which had flourished in a kindred soil of heathendom centuries before Christ came.

Admitting the existence in the universe of such a thing as free agency, though it should be only the purposeless activity of a fairy, that fact of free agency destroys the objection to miracle which reposes on the ground of there being no supernatural. The whole characteristic activity of man, from his beginning of innocent gardening in Eden down to his writing infidel books in Tübingen and Paris at this date, has been supernatural, in the sense in which the objection has to

imply that there can be no supernatural,—the sense, namely, of a free agency in history, distinct from mere physical causation. Whether there shall be miracle, that is, extraordinary agency of God, the supreme Supernatural going out of His ordinary way, in order, say, to forgive sin and save sinners, depends upon His *will*—as it depends upon a *man's* will whether *he* shall do this or that thing out of his ordinary way. Now, the masterly critics do not profess to know God's will. It is vain, therefore, to expect to learn *from them* whether there is to be miracle. But here is a story of miracles as having occurred in fact. Let us consider whether the story is reasonable, plausible, with a face of seeming truth. If there be good reason to believe that miracles have occurred in fact, we will not be disturbed by the assertion of those critics who do not know—and cannot conceivably know—that miracle is impossible.

SEC. 2. *The Man—specially, His sinlessness.*

An *Ecce Homo*, which endeavours to construe the Gospel history upon the supposition that Jesus Christ is a mere man, is (like the *Socinian* “Revised Version” of the Gospels) an astronomy endeavouring to construe the history of our solar system on the supposition that there is not a sun. Upon that view a good many pretty things may be said about the planets and their satellites, especially about earth and the moon: no one thing can be really comprehended or expounded. But, without attempting to explain the history into what is *merely* human, we can see in it what is *really* human. We will begin our detailed study of that history with looking at the man Christ Jesus. And we will look at the history with a reference to the question, whether there may not be in him a *miracle* of manhood. We need not press that question to a conclusion; our having that question in view may give a fruitfulness of interest where inquiry as to His manhood might otherwise be vaguely fruitless.

The bathos of eulogistic eloquence is here malignant in its effect, like other false things, as well as irreverent. To praise the Son of Mary as a very extraordinary man, an intellectual and moral prodigy, wiser than all the philosophers, holier than

all the saints, is worse than useless if it be intended to leave men short of *the question*—whether He is not *God*, manifested in the flesh. It shows want of earnestness (John vii. 14–17), as if the Jews had expended themselves in admiration of Jesus as a self-taught man of genius. And it prevents consideration of the real question of man's life in relation to Him; as noises of empty drums and trumpets have been employed to drown the testimonies of martyrdom on the scaffold.

Though *descriptive characterisation* had in this case been decent, it is doubtful whether it would have been practicable. In a certain violent public controversy there were published caricatures of all the leaders but one; he *could* not be caricatured, because he was so perfectly well-proportioned that no feature could be exaggerated without destroying the likeness to the whole man. The sort of individuality which admits of characterisation may thus involve some disproportion which cannot be where there is the symmetry of ideal perfection. And the felt impossibility of characterisation may be an indication of that symmetry which is a perfection. No one ever really depicts the mental character of Christ; and the reason why painted images of Jesus of Nazareth are not painfully offensive to all who know Him may be, that such things are seen and felt to be *irrelevant*, even for serious imagination; they do not come near the subject, nor even approach the region of it — unless it be as a butterfly wandering where Christian is battling with Apollyon.

In the Apocryphal Gospels there is some attempted characterisation of the childhood or infancy of Jesus. He works miracles for no purpose, but to display them, or to establish a small dominion of the playground or the nursery, or to give vent to some little childish resentment. And we are not disturbed by such unseemliness, and can understand why the primitive Church was not discomposed by such Apocrypha. The whole thing is irrelevant beyond capability of mischief. As soon as we look at it, we see that surely this is the Son of man. It is not Mary's child, nor any child, but a minnikin, childish and not childlike. This petty creature has no relation to that lovely childhood, of Him who, unconscious of beauty as a flower, was in subjection to His parents, and grew in

wisdom and in stature, and in favour with both God and man. And it can never come to be that gracious boy, who conversed with the doctors in the temple, being already fully occupied with whatever was "His Father's," while His understanding and His answers made the old men to wonder. There must have been something in His aspect that impressed them, while attracting: perhaps (Heb. i. 3), without their knowing it, a *look* of Him whom (ver. 1) they had listened to with awe in the holiest moments of their temple studies. And on His young face there may have been (Isa. lii. 14) some light morning shadow of a coming storm, in whose terrific darkness Mary's present little *triduum* of anxiety shall appear as a bright sunshine upon childhood in its play. We may try to think of the opening of that soul to the reception of the ancient word of God, as if Moses and the prophets (cp. Luke ix. 30, 31) were now coming into the real fulness of their meaning, in a temple far more comprehensive than they had ever seen or heard of, a soul (Prov. viii. 22-31) at the same time, into which, it would appear, all the natural world is received as into its home, sown a natural body to be raised a spiritual body, so that common things of earth shall be transfigured into parables of beauty immortal, because comprehended in a wisdom (Prov. viii.) that is eternal in the heavens.

The history of His public ministry, as reflected in the faithful memory of those who were His close companions, leaves us completely ignorant of everything about His bodily aspect. The face which was overshadowed with the crown of thorns, we may form some impression of. We can see that which was stained with the bloody sweat, that from which the soldiers fell back to the ground, that from whose look the fisherman went out to bitter weeping. For there the "visage" that "was marred more than any man" has some *surrounding* of the manhood, some circumstantial of the occasion, for the imagination to lay hold of. But, apart from such *picturesqueness of the circumstances*, we can form no real conception of what the Son of man was like:—even that face, which looked on the little children when He took them into His arms to bless them, or watched them at their games in the market-place; or which was watched with wonder by the

congregation at Nazareth when He read the chapter of Isaiah and spoke the gracious words; or was clouded at the grave of Lazarus His friend, or made human life more festive at the marriage feast of Cana. Yet we seem to have seen that face of the Friend of sinners, the Man of sorrows. It appears to be with us more than any other human countenance. All over Christendom, myriads, who have been brought into the peace of God simply by looking on the face of Christ, feel as if they had been in sight of it all through their Christian life, and that it is the one face which they are sure to recognise as not a stranger to them on the judgment day.

But what they thus perceive is not simply the man and human minister, but really the divine human mediator between God and man. The Hebrews had a keen perception of the visible aspects of excellence in manhood. In their sacred books they have been allowed to give us pictures of their heroes;—the majestic stature of Saul, David's heroic youthful bloom, the fleetness of Asahel's elastic vigour as a roe upon the mountains. And three times in the New Testament an Hebrew has spoken to Hebrews of the Son of David as a hero—the hero of the Christian profession, the man whom it is not a crime to worship. For this at least is folded in the description of Jesus as ἀρχηγός, “commander-in-chief;” which is the original of our expressions “*Captain of Salvation*” (Heb. ii. 10), “*Author of our faith*” (Heb. xii. 2), and (Acts iii. 15), in the word of Peter to his kindred, “Ye killed the *Prince of Life*.” But the “eye-witnesses” of His majesty and of His lowliness seem to have given no indication nor hint of the visible appearance of this one true hero. In one place, “Thou art not yet fifty years of age,” it is suggested to us that He may have appeared prematurely worn in body by His toil; and in another we read of anger in His eyes looking on the Pharisees. But the only thing ostensibly descriptive of His bodily aspect, even by the “painter” Luke, is the statement, that “He set his face stedfastly to go to Jerusalem,” and that the Samaritan villagers would not receive Him, because “His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem.” And this, too, we perceive, is really a note, not upon His (*facies*) bodily aspect literally, but upon (*vultus*) the moral and spiritual aspect of His countenance; such as Moses and Elias

may have looked on at the transfiguration, when they talked with Him (Mark ix.) about (Luke ix.) "the *exodus* which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem;" or such as Esaias may have seen in prophetic vision, when He spoke of Him as "a plant out of a dry ground," one whose "visage was marred more than any man," "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

But all this time the real thing in question, the personal "glory," the moral and spiritual character of Christ as then appearing, may be in full manifestation (John ii. 11; cp. i. 14), so that the reader shall know it, though unable to describe it, in clear distinctness from everything else in the world. Pilate's own original *Eccc Homo*, disfigured with mock royalty, does not, any more than recent eulogistic eloquence, hide the true royalty of "the king of the Jews." It is moving to think of the case of a Jew in our own day whose heart (2 Cor. iii. 16-18) is turned to the Lord, so that now, when the veil, by which his mind was blinded, is taken away, he sees the glory of the Cross. In Jesus of Nazareth he looks upon one whom he has pierced (Zech. xii. 10). He takes home to himself the sentence, "Ye have killed the Prince of Life;" remembering the imprecation, "His blood be on us and on our children." A great revolution takes place in the mind of him who thus comes to see in that *Eccc Homo* whom his fathers crucified, Jehovah's Christ. And the nature of the impression of the manhood of Christ, which may be received in the fresh clear vision of that conversion, is shown in the case of the great Christian Apologist and Church historian Neander. He seems to have been won from Judaism to Christianity simply by *seeing* Christ clearly in the light of history. At least, in the historical character of Christ he saw a demonstration of the truth of Christianity. And in his case it is notable, that it was simply the historical *conception* of that character that produced in his mind the conviction of divinity. That *ideal* of human character, which appears in the Christ of Gospel history, was to his apprehension self-evidently divine. For, from his historical knowledge of the mental condition of mankind at the coming of Christ, he was persuaded that that ideal of manhood, or conception of human character, could not have entered the mind of either Jew or Gentile if it had not come from God in heaven.

Here we begin to perceive that the expression, *miracle* of manhood, is not merely rhetorical, but makes a distinct theological point of Apologetics. It was said to Mary (Luke i. 35), "*That holy thing* which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." The holiness, the moral perfection, of the Son of Mary, was (*N.B.*—"wherefore") secured by the miraculous conception. This (cp. Ps. li. 5) is what Scripture shows in connection with that conception, where idolatry has irrelevant inventions misleading from reality; shows, namely, that, *in the one essential respect of holiness, a new beginning of moral life* then took place in human kind. Tübingen speculation, in prohibition of a true beginning, is here seen to be antichristian from the germ. And Mariolatry is seen to be, while not less irrational in thought, in practical tendency likewise antichristian; because the mind which is drawn into idolising delusions regarding Mary's maternity is drawn away from *Christ*, the sinless Son of God.

The point here is not simply the supernaturalism of the introduction of this child into the world: there was supernaturalism in the gift of Isaac, and of John the Baptist (Luke i. 7, 13—*John* means "gift of God"). The essential thing here, that *newness* in respect of *moral* condition of the nature:—a condition of *holiness*, uprightness, stainless purity and goodness which has not been in the world of men since the fall of Adam. *That* "thing," in a world of depraved mankind, *must* in its origination be supernatural, as the first man's creation was. This is not a son of Mary merely, but "the Son of God." And if that condition which is in Him, of perfect holiness, appears in His life, so that men can see it, then that "manifestation" (John ii. 11) is a true *miracle* of manhood, and evidences Christianity more precisely than an ordinary case of raising from the dead. Others have raised from the dead; *only one has been born free from sin.*

It is true that this evidence, primarily and in itself, is not external, as raising the dead is. For holiness is in its nature a spiritual thing, which (Isa. liii. 1, 2) does not show itself to the carnal eye. But *character*, moral and spiritual character, can appear in the life, and be sworn to in a court of justice. Men are allowed to bear witness as to an acquaintance, that they *know* him as upright and honourable, courteous and charitable and generous. And it is conceivable that what Neander saw in the character of Jesus—a distinctly new

thing, that does not spring up out of the stock of sinful humanity—should now be shining in the Gospel history, distinct from all else in the world, like the star of Bethlehem guiding the wise men. It is possible to maintain without absurdity what was implied in the question of Jesus Himself,—“Which of you convinceth me of sin?” The question was not isolated. The challenge was in all His public life. Before God and men, down to His last cry upon the Cross, He constantly bore Himself as one who has no act of sin upon His conscience, nor stain of sin within His heart, the pure and spotless Lamb of God. Yet He was completely clear of egotism, as humbly simple as a child.

The *sinlessness of Jesus* has come to have a great place in our modern Apologetic. Is it really an historical fact that, outside of Eden, in the moral wilderness of man's world, there has been born one human being without sin? The subject—“*the sinlessness of Jesus*”—was discussed by Ullmann, the editor, in the first article of the first number of the *Studien und Kritiken*. The story of the origin of that periodical, through coincident movements, independently, in the minds of this young editor and of the young publisher Perthes, is a striking illustration of special providence. It began, so strangely in that coincidence, just “in the nick of time” for the fortunes of the Christian cause, then seemingly at its lowest ebb. Through the long remaining public life of Ullmann, the periodical took a leading part, with great success, in a campaign for the restoration of Christian belief. And meanwhile that first article was published separately, in edition after edition, and went on expanding into a book, which now is a goodly volume (Ullmann, *Sinlessness of Jesus*), one of the standard monographs on important topics in our theological libraries. The author's mind had been formed in a community with a shattered faith. And in his work he did not attain to the coherent completeness of the older masters in theology. But irrespectively of its handling of some details, the work as a whole is valuable, were it only because it is monumental of the decisive importance of its germinal idea,—the idea, namely, that *the actual sinlessness of Jesus, as an historical fact, proves the supernatural origin of Christianity*.

Under the impression that absolute sinlessness would make

a man incapable of being tempted, and consequently would make Jesus incapable of sympathy with us in our temptation, some have maintained a doctrine of "sinful flesh" in the person of Christ; to the effect that in His manhood there was a something which, though kept from actual sin by the holiness that was in Him as Immanuel Christ, yet was in Him a sort of real possibility of sinning (*posse peccare*). The question as to that doctrine was handled by the elder Marcus Dods, in his work on *The Incarnation*, with true mastery of Christian thought as well as affluence of learning. We now will consider the matter in its bearing on Apologetics.

We begin with the question—In order to feel temptation so as to be able to sympathise with the tempted, is it necessary that a man should have in him something sinful? Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics*) speaks of a puzzle that tried the scholastic wits of his day,—a proof that there cannot be perfect virtue; on the ground that virtue cannot be perfect without victory in a struggle, while the man who *has* to struggle cannot be perfect, since there is some evil in him to struggle against. Some such puzzle underlies the impression that Christ, since He felt temptation's power, must have had in Him something which, if it should go into activity, *i.e.* become *actuale* = "in act," would be actual sin (*actuale* = "in act"). The history of temptation may suffice to show that the impression is mistaken.

Temptation's power in the form of bread is constituted by the painfulness of hunger, arising out of the natural desire of food. Christ was not kept by His perfect sinlessness from suffering that pain. On the contrary, His very perfection of manhood may have made Him more liable to pain than other men, while able to undergo more of it without being killed by it, or overstrained into torpid feelinglessness. The perfection of manhood may include at once a sensitiveness to pain as keen as a delicate babe's, and a giant's strength of endurance: the lily and the oak. The power of temptation, as assailing us from without, is as the force of a storm; which reaches at once a feather, a willow, and an oak. The man who is simply bad, having in him no *principle* sustaining, no inward power of resisting the assault,—he makes no resistance; he yields to the enemy at once without a struggle. He is a feather carried

away by the wind, and can hardly be said to feel temptation's power at all. If he be as the willow, which bends before the storm, opposing but little resistance to it, he feels but little of its power. The oak, which may break but cannot bend, the one who feels temptation in all its power of storm, is the one who does not sin and *cannot* sin, the impeccable Immanuel.

And as of the body, so of the mind. Our painful feeling of the sorrows that are in the world must have been experienced most profoundly by the true, tender-hearted Son of man. No other can have so deeply felt the baseness of all moral evil as the Holy One of God. And that judicial abandonment to vials of wrath which (1 Cor. xv. 55) is the one true terror of death to a rational soul, is it not confessed, with vividness most awful, in that cry from the Cross, as if of one whom God "made sin for us," and who "hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us"? In point of fact what say the witnesses? What was the impression of His personal character which they received from knowing Him, "who from the beginning were eye-witnesses"?

The history leaves no doubt of the reality of the sufferings of Jesus, both in His initial temptation in the wilderness and also throughout that life which was a life of "temptations" (Luke xxii. 29), even to its close (*e.g.* Matt. xvii. 17). Unreality of His sufferings, their being phantastic or illusory, we *see* to be a wanton, idle dream, when we *look* at the plain, simple manhood in the witnesses (1 Pet. v. 1), and especially in the sufferer:—we *see* Him weeping at the grave, shuddering in the contact of moral baseness of unbelief, loathing the heartless egotism of the Pharisee, longing to be away from the perversity of believers, white with horror as well as hatred of malignant impurity in the demons, agonising in the garden and on the Cross. And, while seeing reality in all His experience of evil, we never for one instant see so much as the passing shadow of an inclination or an impulse in His mind to give way to the suggestion of the evil. On the contrary, we *see* that *in Him* such a thing is *impossible*. Precisely that *the mere impossibility of any inward leaning or drawing toward the evil is what we do see in Him*. We know and feel in our hearts that if any shadow of such a thing were to appear for a moment on the surface of His mind, we should be startled

and amazed, as if the sun had turned into blood. And this spontaneous feeling of ours as we look upon Him, again represents the *direct intuition* of our moral sense, like the feeling which we have when thinking about God. The mere puzzle of the schools, about possibility of perfect virtue, is only a bewilderment of the reflecting intellect, like Zeno's bewilderment as to the possibility of motion, where he has stuck fast for two thousand years. Zeno has a cause for despairing of possibility of motion that goes deeper than he thinks of or knows about. But we—are we to be guided or influenced by such puzzles in the matters of “this life”? Struggle is no more an indispensable condition of virtue in man than it is of holiness in God: moral goodness in both alike is perfect where there is perfect freedom from all inward struggle. And in God-man the suffering through experience of evils accompanying weakness in a sinful world, is as perfect as the hatred of the sin, and the mourning over the ruin of the sinner.

The puzzle arises from a certain view of *the true nature of moral agency*, which we will now consider in its bearing on the sinlessness of Christ, namely, the view that there can be no reality of free moral agency where there is not what has been called a “liberty of indifference,” or “power of contrary choice.” That view was held by Origen, and previously taught by Plato. Yet Plato knew that men are evil in their characters, so universally, that he held they must have fallen from uprightness in a previous state of existence. But if there be evil in them, then so far they have not in them a “liberty of indifference,” as if in equilibrium between good and evil in action; for evil in character or disposition is so far *bias* toward evil in action. He contradicts himself here. The same incoherence is to be noted in the writer, who alone in modern philosophy has a distinction like that of Plato. Kant held that there is in mankind a “radical evil,” which alone can account for the prevalent evil in human action. Yet he, too, held that there cannot be reality of moral agency where there is not “liberty of indifference.” *In fact*, if there be that “radical evil,” there *is* not that “liberty of indifference;” for that radical evil in character or disposition is *bias* toward evil in action. On the other hand, where there is

moral goodness, there is not "liberty of indifference;" for goodness is a *bias* toward good in action.

That bias was supremely powerful in Christ, if He was either sinless or incapable of sinning. It was powerful in the first Adam, who was created "very good," after the image of the Creator. In lower degree, yet really, it exists in those who now are renewed in that image in a reign of grace. In so far as men have in them any such thing as goodness of moral character, they have not in them a power to make the "contrary choice" of evil instead of good. Such a thing as "liberty of indifference," *equilibrium* between choice of good and choice of evil in action, there never has been such a thing in all the "fourfold state" of man for one half-hour; nor, so far as we know, in any rational creature in the universe. And if there had been such a thing, it would not have been a moral condition, but a *non-moral* condition, — *characterlessness*, as in the fairies, that *evil*, which Kant and Plato saw in man, operating in his activity as a disposition, habit (*habitus*, ἔξις), *bent*. And that, so far as it has power, *has* the man (*habitus* from "haberi," so ἔξις from ἔχουαι), or *holds* him, as with a chain. So far as it has power in him, it *enslaves* him; makes in him a "spiritual bondage," which is a moral *impotency* of "the contrary choice." So far as man is *bad* in heart, he has it not in him to choose good in action, but is inclined and impelled toward evil. A *perfectly* bad man is *perfectly* unable to choose good, *absolutely* incapable of loving God or his neighbour. This is the very meaning of a perfect badness, — that the agent has an invincible *aversion* to that good which is laboured for by love. He is completely without liberty of indifference. And yet he is a veritable moral agent, responsible for his action, and for his character as well as conduct. His being a slave of inward lust does not make his evil action to be innocent. On the contrary, it is the lust that makes the sin. It is the evil in a man's heart that makes his action to be evil. Otherwise there would be what the Puritan Thomas Adam has in one of his sermon titles, a "white devil." The man would be made white in his life by being black in his heart. Villainousness of disposition would make innocence in action. The robber would be whitewashed by his greed, and the

adulterer by his lust, and the murderer by his deadly malice. All this contradicts the moral judgment of mankind. Our conscience tells us, in its instinctive or spontaneous utterances, that the great sin is, to be sinful; that to *be* villainous is the grand villainy; that *moral evil in action is complete just in so far as it is rooted in that evil disposition*, character, or bent in the heart (*habitus*, ἔξις), which is a moral bondage, or impotency of contrary choice.

So as to *good*, in disposition and in action. The opinion, that there is no reality of moral agency where there is not "liberty of indifference," or equilibrium of affection toward good and evil, would make, what Adam has in another of his titles, a "black saint." Virtuous action, upon that view, would be made impossible by a man's being perfectly virtuous in his inward condition of nature. Perfect goodness of nature would make action to be perfectly without moral quality of goodness. And this again, though men may get entangled in it by the intellectual puzzlement of Aristotle's problem, contradicts the moral judgment of mankind. Our conscience, in its instinctive or spontaneous utterances, tells us that goodness in action, so far from being made impossible by goodness in disposition of heart, is really constituted by that disposition going into action. If a man's heroic action be found by us to spring out of a character so perfectly heroic that he *could* not have acted otherwise, then his being thus without any "power of contrary choice" is by us regarded as showing, not that his action is morally characterless, but that it is perfectly heroic.

The saints in glory, who cannot sin, and the elect angels, who have in them no power of choosing evil in action, are by us regarded, not as consequently characterless slaves, but as perfected in glorious liberty of the sons of God. And *God Himself, in whom the reality of free agency is supremely perfect, is the one in whom there is the supreme perfection of impotency of contrary choice*. If we could imagine for an instant that there is in Him a "liberty of indifference," relatively to good and evil in action, then in that instant He for us would cease to be, as God, the Holy One who *cannot* lie, the Judge of all the earth who *must* do right.

The ideal of moral excellence, as of all good, is appre-

hended by us in God. Though the Divine Being should have no real existence, the ideal which we represent to ourselves as being in Him shows what is *the ideal at the root of our own rational nature*. Now in God what we perceive is a perfect incapacity of contrary choice, an *absolute* necessity of choosing good in action and refusing evil. And when we think of angels as redeemed men, as being established in a condition truly Godlike, in them, too, what we picture to ourselves is, an inward moral necessity of goodness in action, and inward moral inability to do or speak evil; the *heart* set on good only, and settled invincibly in aversion to evil. This shows that the notion of indifference, as a condition of reality of moral agency, is contradictory of the *root* conception of moral agency in the rational nature of man.

The real condition of moral agency is *rationality*. That rationality, in the constitution of our nature, is the same in man, in angels, and in God; and in all alike it is the one sole, indispensable condition of reality of moral agency. But liberty of indifference, moral necessity, power or impotency of contrary choice—these pertain, not to the unchangeable constitution of man's nature as rational, but to changeable *conditions* of that nature. They have reference, not to the constitutive essence of manhood, but to the *character* of this or that man, at this or that time, in this or that one of his "four estates." But in all the four estates of the constitution, *rationality* remains the same; so that in all alike there is reality of moral agency—in man, whether good or evil, whether bond or free; as in God, and in angels good and evil.

Now, the Gospel history fairly leads to the conclusion that Christ, who was rational, and so had in Him always a reality of moral agency, was never for a moment indifferent, as if He were in *equilibrio* between good and evil. To make His temptation a battle in His heart between good and evil, is to change the Gospel history, and put a silly piece of heathenish mythology in place of it. He appears, not only *sinless*, and averse to sin, but *impeccable*, incapable of sinning; so that sin would on His part be impossible, as it is on God's. But that is rather a dogmatical than a historical view. And, restricting ourselves to the *annals* of this history, we will take into view only *the fact* that He was *actually* sinless. What is that? A sinless man is not merely negative, doing no evil, and having no evil

disposition or habit. A sinless man has *to be* good, and *do* good. Where there is not light, there is darkness. There is sin where there is not full conformity to the moral law. And in the life of Jesus Christ we see, not a mere Stoic, who is negatively stainless because he is an unfeeling ghost, without "vices" because he has an heart of stone. Nor do we see merely a virtuous philosopher, in whose case we have to pass over the first table of the law, "the first and great commandment;" because we are not sure, and he is not himself sure, that he knows God, so as to be able to love Him or to serve Him from the heart, or to have toward Him any *real feeling* of any sort. *In the case of Christ*, as appearing in the history, we are able to think of sinlessness as meaning, in completeness, a *real man's conformity, in disposition and in action, all through His life and in His death, to the whole law, "Love God supremely, Love thy neighbour as thyself."* For such is the representation in the history. Let us, then, suppose that the representation is correct, not mythical, but historical; that in historical fact Jesus Christ was thus a sinless man.

Then He is a miracle of manhood; and there is no rational way of accounting for His existence in the world, but the supposition that in Him there is a new creation of man. Here is a case not calling for Plato's doctrine, of a lapse from uprightness in a previous state of existence. Here is one man completely free from that "radical evil" whose existence in mankind from the root—*ex radice*—is recognised by Kant. The obvious inference is, that this Man has not sprung in the ordinary way from the common stock of humanity.

And in justification of this reasoning, we do not need such confessions of philosophers. We have the testimony of universal experience. Take any really fair test of morality in heart and life; let any intelligent man write down what *he* would regard as a reasonable code of moral laws; and experience teaches us that there is no man who will not be found to be a breaker of those laws. The best of men are the last to think of saying, Which of you convinceth me of sin? They are the men most fully of the mind of that saint who said, that so far from being able to answer to God for his sins, he was not able to answer for his righteousnesses. So said David about himself, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity;" and Isaiah, "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips!" and Paul, "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver

me from the body of this death!" Even the Pharisee in the temple, and the prodigal's elder brother, may not have been perfect all their lives. And as for Marcus Aurelius, we have not seen that he loved either God or his neighbour.

One alone is perfect. Perfectly humble, He yet never prays for forgiveness, nor confesses an error, nor has any word of a mediator between Him and God, while He speaks of righteousness in connection with His going to the Father. And we, and all men, own that in this His bearing is what it ought to be. We should have been wonder-stricken and bewildered if it had been otherwise,—if He had even for a moment, before either God or man, so much as appeared to think of Himself as less than perfect. We *see* that He is a sinless man. But does not that *show*—so that *we* bear witness—that He is the Christ, the Son of God? (Luke xxiii. 47, cp. Matt. xxvii. 54).

The sinlessness of Jesus is under one aspect *veracity* of Jesus. Those critics who seem to regard forgery on the part of Christian scholars as a matter of course, and to have a like facility in believing in false-face on the part of Bible saints, give cause to suspect that the judges have not "sense." Especially, the criticism appears to lack the light of that *moral* sense which (1 Cor. ii. 15, where "judge" is in the Greek, *criticise*) in its higher exercises is the truly higher criticism. Readiness to see everywhere so base a villainy as forgery, and so believe in false-face of heroic saints, is suggestive of a blindness of soul in the critic, such as would be meet accompaniment of an heart of stone; while in relation to man's true life a stone heart is what naturally comes, as in a petrifying well, from theoretical naturalism, casting soul out of man as well as God out of man's universe. *A non-moral criticism naturally results from a non-ethical philosophy.* And this is brought to a testing-point by the contact of unbelieving criticism with the sinlessness of Christ, upon the view that sinlessness implies veracity.

Christ Himself said that the Spirit of truth shall convince the world of sin, especially because "they believe not on me." If He be a sinless man, and men do not believe Him when He speaks of matter-of-fact within His personal knowledge, they show that they are sinful; so as to be blind in soul. And the

criticism which proceeds upon the view that miracle is impossible, that there is no supernatural, that Jesus is not the Christ, the Son of God, is at every step making Him a liar. There is no escaping this conclusion. Regarding Him simply as a man, we see that *He is such a man as to know perfectly well what He is saying* when He claims to be Himself the Christ of God, and assumes to be in habitual fellowship with God as His Father, and professes to have worked veritable miracles in attestation of His claim, and in proof of supernatural religion (see above, Bk. i. chap. ii.). This brings into the question His elementary moral character of truthfulness in speech, honesty in action: to deny the truth of supernatural Christian religion, is to make a lying impostor of Jesus Christ. The daring outrage of Renan upon common human feeling of decency, in making the Jesus of Gospel history into a disreputable Frenchman, untruthful and suicidal, with a glittering varnish of impure sentimentalism, only brings into a dramatic vividness of view what is really in the heart, and at the foundation of all criticism of the Gospel history which proceeds on the assumption that Christianity is not of God.

SEC. 3. *His words. Part First : Regarded generally.*

His prophecy of the resurrection we shall consider in a second part of the present section, as a sample case of the argument from prophecy, in the sense of prediction of the incalculable. And in this first part of His words, regarded generally, there is a difficulty in representing the matter except through a series of gradations, which at first sight may appear to derogate from the grandeur of the subject. For we cannot look at the subject without being strongly under power of the feeling that the speaker of these words is divine. "It is the voice of a God, not of a man," we feel to be base adulation with reference to a crowned king. But it expresses precisely the feeling which, upon reflection, we find to have been operative in our minds as we listened to the Carpenter commanding all nature, and the dark spirit world, and the troubled wayward hearts of men. Hence comparisons or analogies, which are necessary in order to exposition through approaches, appear unworthy, because the great object in view is unapproachably remote; as the telescope, which looks farthest into the border of infinite space, only gives the profoundest impression of infinitude beyond.

The impression of divinity in the words of Christ gives a peculiar impressiveness of interest to the fact, which here meets us at the outset, that *they*, at least, are authentically reported to us in the Gospel histories. Though everything else in these histories should be doubtful or disputed, there can be no dispute nor doubt as to the fact that we here have in our hand a trustworthy report of *the discourses* of Jesus of Nazareth. And the ground upon which this fact is established historically, beyond all probability of dispute or doubt, is very remarkable. The ground is that it is impossible that these discourses should have been originally uttered by any one but Christ Himself; inasmuch as they are different in quality from all other words that have ever been spoken in this world; so that a forger could not invent them any more than he could create the sun, moon, and stars. We thus appear from the outset to have an evidence of the divinity of that original speaker of them.

In illustration of the unquestionableness of the fact that only Christ Himself *can* have uttered these discourses originally, we may call for the testimony of the most conspicuous infidel now in the world, who also is the one who has perpetrated the shamefullest outrage on the memory of Jesus, by making Him into a discreditable Frenchman. But Renan is a scholar, learned in Orientalism, who has travelled in Palestine, and has laboured much and long in the literary sources of information about early Christianity. His position as the coryphæus of infidelity will make his testimony in the present matter more convincing to many than if he had been Calvin, or Augustine, or Paul. Though the matter be only of secondary importance, his testimony regarding it is more weighty in favour of Christianity than all his eight volumes really are against it. And therefore, without saying, *fas est et ab hoste doceri*, we now call that witness. The following are his words:—

A kind of brilliancy at once mild and terrible: *A divine force underlies these words*; as it were, detaches them from the context, and enables the reader easily to recognise them. The words of Jesus, so to say, reveal themselves. When they are vouched in the chaos of unequal authenticity we feel them vibrate. They come, we may say, spontaneously to take their places in our story, where they stand in striking relief.

This quotation we have taken from the valuable Lectures of Professor Salmon of Dublin on *The Books of the New Testament* (2nd ed., London 1886), for the purpose of adding his own comment (p. 114):—

Indeed, I need hardly quote the testimony of Renan or of anybody else ; for we have sufficient evidence of the substantial truthfulness of the Gospel report of our Lord's discourses in the fact that *in all Christian literature there is nothing like them.*

The *italics* in both quotations are ours. The marked words in the second are very important as coming from such a witness and judge in the matter of them. They are quite conclusive to the effect of showing that, simply on ground of literary criticism, the Gospel reports of the Lord's discourses are authentic beyond possibility of question. And the marked words of Renan show that that infidel is under influence of the feeling of a divinity in the words of Christ.

The little stab about a "chaos" betrays the infidel's animus. But the animosity frustrates its own purpose, not only by showing its blindness, but also by suggesting an argument for the authenticity of the Gospel history as a whole. Words of a character so unique as that of Christ's are naturally perishable in their uniqueness, as the crystal-line forms of the snow-flake. The most delicate flowers are not to be found undisturbed in their parterres after an avalanche has swept away the village and its occupants. And, relatively to continuance of such things in their distinctness, an avalanche is nothing in destructive power to a "chaos," which means—*indistinctness*—utter obliteration of everything distinct. How can the discourses of Christ have survived in such clear distinctness unmistakable, through any real catastrophe bringing other things to a condition of chaos? The survival of these utterances in their clear distinctness, as of so many snow-flakes in their exact crystal-line forms of beauty, would have been utterly impossible in a catastrophic violence that brings a world into chaos. It can have been possible only through a process of wonderfully successful care in the ascertainment and the preservation of the faithful testimony of those who "from the beginning

were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word." Here we perceive a striking corroboration of the faithfulness of that record which makes Christ to promise (John xiv. 25, 26, xv. 26, 27) that to His elected witnesses there should be given the Holy Ghost, for the purpose of securing in them an exact "remembrance" of what He had said as well as done. The exact preservation of his discourses is a strong proof of the authenticity of that whole history in which, as in a framework, they have been preserved.

But now, restricting our attention to the discourses, we observe that the preservation of these in that unquestionable genuineness, is a matter of very extraordinary importance in the inquiry as to the truth of Christianity. For it *completes* the information which, for the purpose of that inquiry, is desirable to us in relation to the personal history of the ministry of Christ on earth. And it *contributes* the only information regarding that personal history for which we are absolutely dependent on the Gospel histories. What we need to know of that personal history of Christ, is reducible to the two heads of His *works* and His *words*. If we know these two things, then we have the information regarding Him which we need to have, in order to be in a position for judging in the question, whether He is not the Saviour Son of God. But one of the two things we know independently of the four Gospels—that is to say, about His works. About His works, in order to judge in that question, it is not necessary that we should have details. All that we need is to be assured of the general fact that He professed to work miracles, and was believed to have worked them. And of that general fact we can obtain a full assurance, independently of the evangelical narratives, from other Scriptures of the Apostolic Age, from the Christian tradition of the post-Apostolic Age, and, indeed, from the Jewish and the heathen traditions of the same period, in which it was for generations borne in mind that miracles had in fact been worked by Christ. Hence the extraordinary value of that preservation of His discourses. It puts us completely upon historic ground in the very scenes of Gospel history. We *knew* His works, and now we know His *words*: those words which *must* be His, because they are inimitable, no other can have

spoken them. We *hear* Him, as well as see Him. *What more* could there be for us?

For instance, we may consider how these words of Christ Himself can be made to bear upon such a "theory" of the primæval Christianity, as that which accounts for it by supposing that Paul's "gospel" was fundamentally and essentially different from the doctrine which the original apostles had received and taught from Christ. As the "theory" contradicts the facts of the Gospel history which ascribes miracles to Jesus, the Gospel history was got rid of by being declared a forgery. But the discourses of Christ cannot be so got rid of. *They* remain in clear distinctness, unquestionably genuine utterances of His, though everything else in the history should be a "chaos." And they suffice to destroy that "theory" in its very foundation. For the discourses of Christ show that Paul's doctrine really was no innovation, but really an evolution, expansion, and application of the teaching of Christ Himself. The Pauline ideas of the universal freedom of the gospel call to Church fellowship and salvation, and of justification by faith simply pervade the ministry of Christ as represented by His words. And the Pauline doctrine of the personal glory of Christ as Redeemer, we now shall find to be the one thing which alone accounts for the very existence of those words in their main characteristic aspects of peculiar power and originality of wisdom. The "theory" thus does good service here by constraining attention to *the inward character of the words*.

When we look into the inward character of the words, they become to us as lamps, in the light of which we see the true character of the whole movement in the history. This is an effect of the words of any leading personage in a movement: the words illustrate the movement by showing us what was in the inward life, the mind and heart of the mover. Thus a flood of light is thrown upon the true character of the great Puritan movement of the seventeenth century by the publication of Cromwell's *Letters and Speeches*; and for the grander movement of the Reformation a similar service is done by the *Table-Talk*, the *Correspondence*, and other such personal utterances of Martin Luther. But Jesus Christ is not merely a leading representative personage in the Gospel history. He

really is the movement in Himself; so that in seeing into His mind, we are looking into the heart of the meaning of the Gospel history. Chalmers's letters, speeches, and private notes regarding the Disruption history, in which he was so great a part, and Wesley's *Diaries* in connection with the early Methodism, come far short of the discourses of our Lord when viewed as illustrating history,—were it only on this account that Christ Himself is the Gospel history, while these men are only agents in one part of the history of the kingdom of Christ.

1. The *peculiar power* of the words of Christ is represented at the present hour by the actual influence of His teaching in the world. We are so familiar with it, as we are with the sunshine, that it is only on reflection that we become aware how *amazing* this thing is; as men do not wonder at the daylight. There never has been anything like it in the history of the world. Eighteen centuries after He was crucified, a young Galilean rustic is exercising an influence most profoundly vital upon the innermost lives of men, over an empire far wider than that which put him to the shameful death. Through all the centuries that influence has been stedfastly continuous in the history, as the movement of a river from its fountain to the sea. At this hour it is omnipresent in Christendom, as the pressure of the ocean on its bed, or the operation of the sunlight on the world at noon. And it is distinctly a *personal* influence of one that "*liveth, and was dead.*" When the Arab, whose steed has swerved, says that the shadow of Melech Richard has crossed the path, there we see an empire of the imagination, of the shadowy recollection of the hero king of England. An empire far more impressive over the intellect of mankind is exhibited in the acknowledged conformity of civilised men to the canons of Aristotle's logic, as if the Stagirite had been seated upon a throne, ruling all the tribes, and nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues. But we know that that sovereignty now has really nothing to do with the actual government of men's thoughts, any more than it has to do with the action of the Arabian steed. Aristotle personally is only like the picture or the statue of some ancient legislator in the palace of justice: the laws and the administration of them have

influence only on account of their own supposed excellence, and that influence is in no way dependent upon any real or even imagined *authority* of that man.

On the other hand, the influence of Jesus Christ, now in daily exercise through these words in our hands upon the souls of men, is distinctly a *personal* influence of one supposed to be alive and to speak with *authority*, not as the scribes. *If it were supposed that Christ is dead*, Christendom would cease to live: His words, which now "are spirit and are life," would in respect of influence become as the withered leaves of an *Ecce Homo*. And they would in like manner become sapless and powerless to move the heart and life of men, if He were for an instant supposed not to have in His teaching an authority that is nothing less than divine. Divinity, and nothing less, is the character of that authority which he assumes in saying, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." A school of philosophers, with reference to worldly things which the world can know, that should rest upon the *ipse dixit* of a human master, would have made itself the laughing-stock of heathen antiquity. But the Son of Mary engages through His teaching to give men rest unto their souls. He undertakes for all sin-laden and sorrow-laden humanity (Matt. xi. 26-28), to show sinners the Father, and set them at rest in a heavenly home of peace and love with God. For this end He professes to exercise a *sovereignty* of might as well as right, which is the very sovereignty of God the Father committed to the Son. And no one thinks of laughing at His "*ipse dixit*." No one sees any incongruity between the vastness of the claim and the humility of Him who makes the claim. We do not even wonder at His gracious words as we do not wonder at the sunlight. As it is natural for the sun to shine, robing himself in his royalty of light, so to our apprehension that amazing claim of Jesus of Nazareth, to be received as a haven of rest unto our souls, is natural for Him. The assumption becomes Him, fits Him as His own garment of light. For we know in our hearts that this is the Christ, the Son of God, the same who cried of old, "Look unto me and be saved, all ye ends of the earth; for I am God." And that impression on our mind comes directly from His own words in the Gospels.

It is not Paul that has led us to see the glory of Christ as Redeemer. It is not John the Divine that has made us perceive the Godhead in His person. It is Christ Himself; the Word "made flesh and dwelling among us, full of grace and truth." When He proceeds to work His wonders (John ii. 11), "He makes manifest His own glory," and "we believe on Him." And when He speaks, we say in our heart, "His word is with power . . . He speaks with authority . . . Never man spake like this." So we come to be able to say to Paul and John, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world" (John iv. 42). Hence we do not wonder at the *obedience* which is yielded to His word by the powers of nature, and the dark domain of evil, and the troubled wayward souls of men. The guilty are cheered, as if an angel of pardon had visibly come from heaven's throne with peace to the conscience; so that when the lame walk, it seems only as if (cp. Neh. viii. 10) restoration of the body had come in continuation of the joy of Jehovah in the soul. The demons, furious yet obedient, confess Him, and, confessing, flee as He directs them. He rebukes the fever, and it is gone. He bids the stormy wind and waves be still, and immediately there is a great calm. He cries with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth," and the dead comes alive out of the grave. And we do not wonder at all this. For all this time we have known, without thinking that we knew, we have *perceived* (John iv. 19) that "truly this is the Son of God." Why *should* He not call forth Lazarus from the grave? He called the worlds into being out of nothing.

Such is, and has been, the power of His words, through more than eighteen hundred years, over a Christendom which they have created and sustained, and which is manifestly destined to be coextensive with the world. From a long and varied historical experience of mankind, it now is clear that, so long as the world remains with men in it, these words of His will continue to make the same impression upon mankind as hitherto. We at present will not press that fact to its obvious conclusion. We will only say, what no reasonable being can deny, that the fact of such an impression made by the words, a power so peculiar exercised by them, is a pre-

sumptive evidence of *divinity* in the speaker. "Divinity" is the expression, which in this relation we have found employed, for description of the impression which they make upon the mind by the chief of living infidels.

2. If we speak of *originality of wisdom* as a characteristic aspect of the words of Christ, we must begin with disclaiming the excessively jejune conception of an originality of natural human genius as accounting for that character of His teaching and for its effects. Those who speak of Him as a wonderfully-gifted, self-taught "Rabbi," forget that He *was* not a Rabbi in any sense like that which is really meant by them in so speaking; and that (John vii. 14-18) even the Jews knew that He had not any learning, so that it was a wonder to them that He could read, He, on that occasion, strongly disclaimed the view that His originality was that of human genius, such that a man might conceivably claim some glory of it for himself. He claimed to be only as a mirror, that reflects here on earth a sun that shines in heaven: "My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me." If, then, we make use of the originality of natural genius for illustration of this one of the aspects of His teaching, it must be upon the distinct understanding that the illustration is to be of contrast; or, we may use it as one step of a ladder or stair, for the purpose of rising beyond it.

Originality, in the sense of an uncommon gift of vision, may be in a madman; whose observation is out of the beaten track, because he is "beside *himself*," or "*out of his mind*." Hence the Greeks had one word—*mania*—for madness and for prophetic inspiration; and savages have been known to reverence insanity as inspiration, no doubt presuming that the demented person, being out of his own mind, is possessed by another mind. But in a sane mind there may be a real originality, the result of a natural gift of vision, which is not bestowed on the generality of men; and which, to the common-place man, may appear as either madness or inspiration, because it is completely out of the beaten track alone frequented by him; and a common-place man is never aware of the fact that *he* is not *compos mentis*. Thus, not only (Acts xxvi. 24) Paul was thought beside himself by Festus, but also (Mark iii. 21) Christ, by His own domestic connec-

tions. And in His procedure, regarded simply as that of a man, there may, when He began a career of public ministry, have appeared to them a strangeness, such as would appear in the action of the *magi* when they followed a star which other men did not see. For in His teaching, disclosing the inward impulse of that procedure, there is a sovereign originality, which to not a few worldly wise men may have appeared a deplorable eccentricity.

That originality is quite distinct from the attainment of a self-taught man of talent. The talented self-taught man attains, without the aid of schools, what others attain by means of that aid. But original genius makes the old things to be new. Notwithstanding all that the books have said about them, it sees them as if they now were first created, and speaks of them as if they had never been heard of until now. Hence men speak of the "inspiration of genius;" making the genius to be fresh, original in comparison with talent, as a prophet is in comparison with a common-place devout man talking platitudes. And the teaching of Christ is supremely thus original, while never eccentric. So far from being eccentric, His teaching is characterised by a boundless power of sovereign concentration, collecting all things into one, the highest point of view, like *magi* coming from afar to worship the King of heaven; replacing the dislocated fragments of truth in their true connection with life, as if a shepherd of the stars had been restoring the wanderers to their places and their offices in the system of the universe. "To him that hath shall be given" is the degraded common-place of a hard cynical worldliness, meaning, that the worldly successful thing is worldly success; in the word of Christ it is a maxim of profound and far-reaching heavenly wisdom, full of consolation to the poor and hungry and sorrowful souls of men, while fraught with warning terrors to those who are "rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing"; He makes "all things new."

But there has been speech about "*degrees* of inspiration." And it may be imagined that the originality of Christ is only a superlatively high degree of that kind of originality which is found in natural human genius. That imagination is contradicted by the Gospel history, and by everything that we

really know about Christ and His teaching. The mind which has appeared in His teaching has in it an originality as distinct in kind from that of all natural human genius, as the creation of the stars is from the discoveries of astronomy. "All that ever were before Him were thieves and robbers." "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." In Him, alone of all the teachers of mankind, we find a true original fountain of wisdom, proceeding directly from the bosom of the invisible God.

In order to see this rightly, let us approach it from some distance, step by step. (1) The *regenerate* man has a kind of vision (Luke viii. 9, 10) of spiritual things, which is not given to the worldly-minded man of genius. (2) A *prophet* has a revelation from heaven, which is not given to the ordinary children of God upon earth; as the astronomer, looking up into the firmament, sees the moon and the stars, which are not seen by those who only look round them on the earth while walking in those lights. (3) *Moses*, a "mediator" between God and man, is (Deut. xxxiv. 10) distinct from all ordinary prophets in this, that he received the great original revelation of the Old Testament, of which all the following history of revelation is an application. He, being thus original in comparison with them as derivative, being the one to whom "the Lord spoke face to face," is like a moon or planetary star, which gives light to astronomers and others upon earth, but itself is lighted straight from a sun which they cannot see. But (4) and last, *Christ is the sun* of all that system, "from whom, and by whom, and to whom are all things;" so that "the law and the prophets" (Matt. xi. 13), speaking through John the Baptist, their latest "voice," will own Him as the sun. "Of His fulness have we all received."

Christ in the history distinctly claims that place of sun (John viii. 12). He freely places Himself under law to Old Testament revelation—"it is written." In His parables we see a like subjection to the natural revelation of God. Nevertheless (John v. 36), He distinctly claims to have a *divine commanding originality*, transcending (John x. 7, 8) all that has hitherto appeared even in supernatural revelation, as the moon and the stars are transcended by the sun. As He once

expressly said, "Before Abraham was, I am," so in the whole manner of His teaching He continually assumed, "Before Isaiah was, or Moses was, I am" (cp. John i. 15). This came out most fully in the last Gospel. And it has been coming out clearly in all the life of Christendom from that time. Not only Christendom owns an *absolute* originality of Christ: it shows in itself a *relative* originality, as compared with the heathen world, which is monumental of the absolute originality which it has in Him: we see Christ in Christendom (Ps. cx. 4),—the dewdrops are monumental of the sun.

This we find illustrated even in the *natural* products of genius in Christendom. There are "degrees of inspiration of natural genius:" such that Virgil is only a moon where Homer is the noon-day or the setting sun; and Horace will not compare himself to Pindar, the fervidly sublime. Now, with the supremely original genius of heathenism, let us compare that of Shakespeare. The Englishman's originality has not a fresh unhackneyed theme, like that of Homer's heroic age. He is weighted with many generations of those (*qui ante nos nostra dixerunt*) predecessors who are the oppressors of men born to be "sweet kings of song." Yet Shakespeare is the more markedly original of the two. His superiority in this respect is evinced by the mark of self-effacement, like that of Moses, "who wist not that his face shone." Shakespeare is like the light, which brings to view all things but itself. In Homer's minstrels, Phemius and Demodocus, we obtain pathetic side-glances of the poet. In reading Shakespeare, we only feel—with the great Duke of Marlborough—that we are in a noble history of the English Middle Ages. It is only upon reflection that we awaken to the fact that this is a day-dream, in which an enchanter has filled our world with heroic men and women of his own creation. And even upon reflection, and with diligence of searching, we can find no trace of the enchanter. Shakespeare's world, moreover, has in it a far more copious wealth of varied fulness than that of Homer. And *it is a wholly different world* from Homer's. It is wholly different from all that heathenism ever saw or dreamed. It is a Christendom, a world made new by the word of Christ. Christian civilisation is in the poet's mind, influencing all his visions, even of

the heathen gods and goddesses. *Christian* mind is quite original in the world: and it is so on account of the fountain of its originality in Jesus Christ.

Here, again, it is not necessary to press the obvious inference. It suffices to note the clear suggestion of a presumptive evidence, constituting at least another light-ray of a circumstantial proof. There is here not only a spiritual knowledge that is unworldly, but an absolute originality, in declaration of the secret things of God, which appears to be competent only to Deity. The aged martyr, Bishop Pothinus of Lyons, when asked by the inquisitor magistrate, "Who or what is this God of you Christians?" answered, "*You* shall know Him if you be worthy." And no doubt, though God should be revealed outwardly, we need an inward gift of vision in order to see Him as disclosed in the outward light. But the present question is the previous one, as to that outward revelation, how or whence any one is able to make it. That question was answered by one of those poets who were the "prophets" of heathenism (Titus i. 12), and who, as Paul showed the Athenians, have sometimes spoken truth. In the *Bacchæ* of Euripides, a magistrate like "jesting Pilate," before whom there has been brought one who is a God in the form of man, asks him how he comes to have this new revelation which he professes to be declaring to the world. The answer is, "By seeing Him who sees; and I institute these mysteries." That is to say, the knowledge of unseen things, which warrants him in founding a new religion among men, is derived from a personal acquaintance with the omniscient, such as is possible only for one who is omniscient God Himself—"seeing Him who sees."

We have seen that Christ (Matt. xi. 25-29) claims to have a sovereignty, identical with the sovereignty of God the Father, in bestowing upon man the inward gift of sight (in ver. 27, "will" is—*βούληται*—lit. "*may choose to reveal Him*"). On another occasion (John x. 15-30) He spoke of the outward gift of revelation and redemption. He spoke of Himself as "the Good Shepherd," who alone brings that revelation and redemption to lost men. And He spoke of His qualification for that as consisting in "seeing Him who sees,"—His having a kind of knowledge of God the Father such

as would not have been possible if He had not Himself been God the Son: "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep." On a like occasion, the Jews took up stones to stone Him, because He had made their God His Father. He did not explain that He really meant only a fatherhood which is enjoyed by all believers. He did not in any way shrink back from His position of claiming a Sonship which is unique—involving equality of nature with God. He adhered to the position, in terms of whose meaning there could be no misunderstanding (ver. 30): "I and the Father (*ἐν ἑσμεν*) are *one thing*." Apparently, He claims to have a species of knowledge which is impossible for any creature; and when challenged for this, He affirms that He is, in *being*, the same as God the Father.

Part Second: His prophecy of His resurrection.

Prophecy is one of the three aspects of Messianic mediatorship. It therefore is right and reasonable to lay some emphasis on prophecy in connection with the words of Christ. That also will serve as a preparation for our inquiry into the external evidence of prophecy at a later stage of this work (Bk. ii. chap. iii.). We now will consider the prediction of the resurrection in three days as a sample case for expiscation of what we proceed to note, namely:—

NOTE: *The nature of the Apologetic argument from prophecy.*

We saw, in the case of Moses and others, the inspiration which goes to the making of a prophet. *The evidence of prophecy is constituted by miracle of wisdom*, "wonder" of manifested supernaturalism of knowledge. *And it especially appears in prediction of the incalculable.* By parity of reasoning, it may appear if—e.g. in the *Mosaic Origins*—a man show that he has a knowledge of *the past* which he could not have by nature; or, if he show that he knows the hearts and tries the reins of men; or, if he give a clear, coherent view of the system of the world, which cannot have been naturally attained to by him as a man. But prediction of the incalculable is best fitted for illustration of the nature of the Apologetic argument on the present ground of prophecy.

The "power" which appeared in the words of Christ is peculiarly associated with the work of the Third Person of the

Godhead (τὸ λαλῆσαι διὰ τῶν προφητῶν), "the one who spoke through the prophets." "Wisdom," as original insight into the nature of things and the substance of good, is especially associated in our mind with the Second Person, who is in the bosom of the Father, and whose sunlight of instruction to mankind is a radiation from that bosom. But in our study of the sample prediction of the resurrection in three days we need not seek the aid of such theologising. It is better that we should test the prediction simply on its own merits, in order to see whether it has in it an evidence that the utterance of it must have been from supernatural knowledge on the part of Jesus.

1. The event foretold is clearly *incalculable*. It is possible fraudulently to represent as oracular prediction what is only sagacious calculation or fortunate guesswork. And it is possible, through conspiracy on behalf of a pretended oracle, to bring about an occurrence that shall correspond to the prediction. But that possibility does not obscure the fact that genuine prediction of the incalculable is a miracle of knowledge; and, in such a case as the present, is an evidential wonder of wisdom. The supernatural is in the utterance. But the proof of it is in the event, which shows that the incalculable event was foreseen. Hence the *evidence* of prophecy is in the fulfilment. As miracle is constituted as a "sign," not simply by the operation of the supernatural, but by the *pointed manifestation* ("finger of God"), which at the same time is *manifest pointing* ("the kingdom of God hath come unto you"), so we may say that the miracle in prophecy is constituted by the utterance *as fulfilled*, or by the occurrence *as foretold*.

The *incalculableness* of the event is what is assumed in the maxim, *prædixit quia prædestinavit*—"the reason of prediction is sovereign foreordination." The event is regarded as one whose future occurrence cannot have been certainly known through calculation of the future from the present or the past. It thus can have been really known only by the Omniscient. For the event is regarded, further, as one not simply *future*, but also dependent upon *will*. Relatively to the Divine Being, consequently, it is an object, not simply of Omniscient knowledge (*scientia simplicis intelligentiæ*), but of "fore-knowledge absolute" (*scientia visionis*),—knowledge based upon will, founded in sovereign predetermination of the event (to show how this "Christian fate" differs from a "Stoical fate," of determination without *will*, and from a Mahommedan fatalism, of sheer will without *holiness* or any moral character, might be

a profitable exercise, but it is one in which we may not linger here). Relatively to the prophet's perception of the future, the event thus is simply in the hand of the Almighty disposer of all events, so that the knowledge of it must needs be "of the Lord." Further definition is postponed (see Bk. ii. chap. iii.).

On the part of some expositors and apologists of Christianity, there is a disposition to reduce the amount of ostensible prediction of the incalculable to a *minimum* — as near to nothing as may be decently practicable. They fain would have it to be only, at the utmost, as a microscopic seed-spore of real prediction, to be developed into amplitude of forecast or proclamation by the simply human sagacity of the prophets. Whether the disposition thus appearing is Christian or rational, depends upon the general character of the ostensible revelation through prophecy. Clearly, there is no "*evidence* of prophecy" proving a divinity of the utterance, so far as the forecast is only an astonishing result of sagacity, of the same natural character as is exhibited in wonderful feats of arithmetic by children of abnormal condition of intelligence. But at the present point it will serve our purpose to proceed upon the view, that no real prediction is to be admitted that can by any possibility be rejected (though *not* in the spirit of the saying, "This is the heir: let us kill him; and the inheritance shall be *ours*;" — *we* shall be "*critics*" renowned in story!).

The fact of the prediction is recorded by all the four evangelists. In the Synoptists we find that it was uttered by Christ *four times* in Galilee, or on the way to Jerusalem toward the close of His earthly ministry; and in John (ii. 19) that, besides, it was uttered once at an earlier period in Jerusalem. On all the five occasions there was express specification of the period of *three days*. On three occasions the utterance, to *His disciples apart*, was clear and unmistakable to the effect that the issue of the present conflict was to be His death, followed by His resurrection on the third day. On the two other occasions, *in hearing of His enemies*, it was enigmatical, wrapped up in the type of "destroy this temple," and in the no-sign "sign of Jonas the prophet." For the *evidential* purpose of prediction, an enigmatical prediction is quite good, as His enemies knew (Matt. xxvii. 63). The solution of

Samson's riddle shows that *the thing* was in his mind when the riddle was propounded by him. That those enemies were in fact aware of Jesus having emitted the prediction, and that they had regarded it as on His part a gage of battle on behalf of His claim to be the Christ of God (cp. John viii. 28), they showed by their action in sealing and guarding the sepulchre; by their perverting it (Matt. xxvi. 61; Mark xiv. 58) into false witness in order to securing the judicial murder of Him; and (Mark xv. 29) by their flinging it at Him as an insult in aggravation of His sufferings on the Cross. But the fact of His having uttered it is made abundantly clear by the Gospel witness regarding what He said to His disciples; on which we shall presently make observations.

Returning to the point of *incalculableness*, we now observe, that an event, which is not absolutely incalculable in its nature, may be relatively incalculable in the circumstances. There was nothing in the nature of things to prevent the birth of a man-child at Bethlehem. Yet the birth of Mary's son there at that point of space and time really could be foreknown by no one but the One who "worketh all things according to the counsel of His own will." And again, the death of Jesus in the circumstances was perhaps inevitable, so that the prediction of it might not be manifestly supernatural. But, as we shall see, in the detailed specification of circumstances included in the prediction of Christ, there is abundant evidence of supernatural forecast; and the *manner* of the sufferings was relatively incalculable. But what we now have to do with is His foretelling that He was to rise from the dead. *Absolute* incalculableness is perfectly clear in the event of resurrection as predicted by Him.

(1.) *The specification of three days* was of the *substance* of the prediction, though not of the event. It was to be, not generally a resurrection, but specially a resurrection *on the third day* after death. This point is made clear by the fact that the *triduum* was expressly specified by Christ *on all the five occasions* of recorded utterance of the prediction.

The specification of a term, especially of a *short* time, was important as showing that *Christ in submitting to the humiliation of death was not yielding to any fatal necessity*, nor to the power of man, but was proceeding *freely*, in accordance with His own plan; and accordingly that He was retaining the

command of the situation ; as Samson did when he suffered the Philistines to bind him with his locks unshorn (cp. Acts ii. 24). We remember that He made a point of showing this at the moment of His being laid hands on, by that look, before which the Ironclads fell back to the ground ; and when before Pilate, by saying that the only *will* which He yielded to in dying was that of God, which also was His own. And we know that the *shortness* of the term, such that the body of that Holy One should not "see corruption," was a point of prophecy from the distant ancient time. But irrespectively of these lights, the *specification of a short period* is, in such a case, in itself significant of *prædixit quia prædestinavit*. So Euripides represents Dionysus as saying to the ruler who had threatened him with imprisonment, that *the prison would not hold him long* ; and he represents the shortness of the duration of it as adding an element of awe to the wonder of the people, when it was found that mysteriously the prison had somehow been opened, and the prisoner was gone. But further,—

The specification of a *term*, though it should be long, is a distinct mark of reality of the prediction. A generation later than this, there will be a *vague* expectation in some parts of the Roman empire of Nero's returning, after he has been generally supposed to be dead. If Jephtha's daughter had appeared alive some years after she went away to mourn her virginity, the Israelites might have formed the opinion that she had after all *not* suffered death. The Iphigenia, who is sacrificed for all the Hellenes at Aulis, is afterwards found mysteriously in Tauris ; whether in a phantastic life or from a phantastic death, is left obscure. *Indefiniteness* tends to weaken the evidence of prophecy, by making uncertain the reality of prediction. *The specific term*, whether of days, or of years, or of hours, greatly strengthens the evidence. And the circumstance of the three days would itself have sufficed to show that Christ, in His expectation of rising again from the dead, was not giving way to any enthusiasm of confidence in the goodness of His cause and the justice of the Almighty ; but was confident of the event as a thing which He *knew* to be determined, *immutably*, in the counsel of God's will. It is said that a French infidel fanatic once

put to a famous diplomatist the argumentative question: "Would it not be easy *for me* to start a new religion, like Jesus Christ?" "Quite easy," was the answer; "you have only to get yourself crucified, and rise from the dead on the third day." The specification of the day is felt as clenching the matter.

(2.) But now, apart from the circumstance of the three days, let us look directly at the predicted *event in the substance* of it. It is worth considering closely, in the exact specific nature of it, in rigorously prosaic literalism; were it only because it seems impossible that any rational creature should really so look at it without believing, though he should believe only to tremble. In two of the six places in which the prediction to the disciples is recorded, the word employed is "shall be raised," the action being thus ascribed to *God the Father*; as came to be the custom in the Apostolic Age, because that made a point in the Apologetic argument in application to the Jews. But in four of the Gospel passages the expression is "*shall rise again*;" suggesting action of Christ *Himself as God*, like the ancient heroes in breaking the Philistine withes. It is He, too, that is to raise the temple when it is cast down. In connection with the sign of Jonas, He makes no reference to the manner of His deliverance from "the heart of the earth."

The moral greatness of the event is apt to make us overlook the *simple physical fact* of its incalculableness. Let us take a simple case. The wonderful draught of fishes (Luke v. 1-11) by which Peter was overwhelmed with awe and terror, as if he had suddenly seen God, was not in itself a thing manifestly supernatural. An astonishingly great haul of fish would not have so unmanned the Man of Rock, if there had not been something else on the occasion, as a pointed "finger of God." A shoal of fish might conceivably have been attracted to the spot by ground bait. Or Jesus, perhaps a skilful "weather prophet," might conceivably have seen some "sign" of a sudden change in their unaccountable moods, which had escaped the notice of the fishermen of the lake, who had been fruitlessly toiling all the night. As Peter and Andrew, and James and John were, we suppose (John i. 29, etc.), personally acquainted with Jesus through the Baptist, it is not in the least likely that any such thought occurred to Peter's mind on the occasion. And we only glance at those ideal possibilities

in order that *our* mind may have more distinctly in its view *the reality* of what happened,—namely, the occurrence of an absolutely incalculable event. To Peter's mind the overwhelming thing is the *correspondence* of the occurrence to the prediction which was implied in the words of Jesus, who has no doubt made their meaning of promise clearly pointed by His look and the tone of His voice. And that which gives overwhelmingness to the correspondence, is the incalculableness of the occurrence in this case. That sends flashingly into Peter's mind a sudden recognition of the real presence here of God Almighty. For it shows that there must have been here at least a supernatural wisdom in the forecast, though there should have been no extraordinary operation of God's power, but only His ordinary providence in bringing about the fulfilment.

The very homeliness of the illustration is perhaps intended for the purpose of enabling us to look at the *literal matter of fact*, which is in the core of such predictions,—*an absolute command of the government of the event*. It is quite conceivable that a shoal should have simply wandered round to the spot. And yet to a fisherman, accustomed to reflect, as we know those four Galileans were, perhaps the presence of a shoal there and then, precisely at that point of space and time, was the greatest of all conceivable wonders. The appearance of a second sun in the firmament might to them be somewhat startling if not terrific; more so, perhaps, than a solar eclipse. But it might not be to their apprehension manifestly supernatural. They might imagine it was only some *other* terrific freak of nature, like a comet or an earthquake. Even raising the dead, if it should take them suddenly at unawares, giving them no time to think about it (as when the soldiers hurriedly retreating got their comrade back alive upon his contact with the prophet's bones, 2 Kings xiii. 21), might fail to occasion a terror of supernaturalism; through sheer bewilderment making them unable to use their eyes, or to know what to think about the matter; and so, leaving in their minds no room for wonder, as the result of a rational perception of the true significance of the strange event. But the simple homely thing, which now has taken place, they can perfectly take the measure of;—though they should not now be so collected as on that other occasion, when they carefully

counted the fishes, and kept a business note of the exact number,—to be recorded in a history seventy years after—namely, 153.

Peter, a fisherman, and a very able man, can realise the wonder here more thoroughly than the elder Pliny could, with all his natural history ; or Aristotle, with his Providence “beyond the moon.” And to his most rational view and feeling, on this occasion, real prediction of the movement of the fishes may be as truly wonderful, extraordinary, miraculous, as if a trumpet-blast in heaven had been followed before his eyes by resurrection of all the dead in Galilee. For here again we must look at what is the core of the matter, what is the essence of the verification of supernaturalism in prediction ;—namely, simple incalculableness of the event ; and the simpler the event, the more plain is the incalculableness. Let us, then, consider the relative nature of the case in hand.

The fish, though very stupid as compared with other animals of our acquaintance, is in the highest degree capricious in its moods, and therefore most completely defying calculation in its movements ; as compared, for instance, with the instinct of some other animals of low intelligence, which can be reckoned on as we reckon on machinery of clock-work. Now, we know that Peter, with his sensitive nature, has an eye for *wild* things ; so that in his history of the Lord's temptation he has nothing but the *wild* things of the universe—the wilderness itself, the wild beasts, and the angels good and evil. And if his mind have such a leaning, it will find exercise in the contemplation of the fishes of his lake. Of all things in the universe, they are perhaps the wildest (in the sense of *shy—feræ naturæ*). Our English name of “deer” is the German *Thier*, “a wild thing,” as if the antlered monarch had borne the crown of shyness among creatures. But once in a conversation on Hebridean waters, that was put to a test. It was near the Isle of Jura—all deer forest. And, in connection with *fiadh*, “the wild one,” the Gaelic name for “deer,” it was asked, of a man who had been a forester thirty years,—Whether his charge had not come to know their own keeper, as the sheep will know their shepherd, and even his mysteriously foolish young dog ? That expert witness answered, No ; that perhaps they had come

to be a shade less shy to him than they would be to another man, but that they really always made a stranger of him. "For," he added, "they're *wild* things, sir;—*just like the fishes*, that skimmer away from the shadow of your approaching the burn-side."—Peter is prepared to see a *perfect* miracle in the real prediction of one movement of a fish.

Looking down over the boat-side into the mysterious deeps of his lake, until his mind's eye wandered into the darkness there, he may have reflected—like Cardinal Newman—that the irrational creatures down there are really stranger to him than the angels, black or white, *can* be. An angel is rational: there is some possibility of our comprehending his mind, and calculating on the action of it. But the wild things of the deep waters, which a fisherman may dimly see or feel, are utterly incomprehensible to him. He may feel that these deeps within reach of his hand are really more mysterious for him than either heaven or hell can be; since a man can have either of *them* in his heart, if not both. And this thing which Jesus has done, in simply foretelling *what the fishes will do*, may be more distinctly supernatural to the feeling of one who knows them and their ways, than if He had successfully "called *spirits* from the vasty deep."

But in the case of resurrection the event is incalculable *on a further account*—of its being *naturally impossible*. One might venture on a guessing prediction of a successful cast of the net, and happen to guess right, against all natural probability, once in a million of years. But there is no shadow of an ideal possibility of successful guessing at the resurrection of a dead man. *A dead man's rising again is exhaustive of the possibility of wonder*. We are so familiar with the thought of all men's coming to life again, that we lose acquaintance with the wonder of it; which is a grievous loss, because even the heathens knew that wonder is the beginning of wisdom. The miracle in this case calls for, not simply some force not ordinarily operative in history, but distinctly the power of *God*, the *omnipotence* of the Almighty; and that omnipotence, operating *against*, in *counteraction* of what takes place in the ordinary course of His working. Here is the highest conceivable degree of extraordinary supernaturalism:—God Himself, the Lord of life, binding the strongest of His ministers, Death, and reversing the course

of His own government (in ordinary providence) by a pure and simple act of *will*.

Then for three days the matter lay at the turning of the tide of life for mankind and the rational universe. And then, the wonder of the prediction—by Him who there lies low! Science, putting solid reason into the lofty rhythmic utterances of Lucretius, may now have begun to perceive how, on the ordinary lines of the Creator's working, worlds may in a sense really grow out of seeming nothingness. And, as we have seen, rustics might by their very simplicity of ignorance be kept from overwhelming terror of a sudden wonder by the appearance one day of two suns in their sky; they might even not be much moved if the almanac should have had in it a prediction of that appearance, along with that of comets and eclipses. But all men, learned and unlearned alike, of all classes, gentle and simple, see that a dead man's rising is a pure and perfect natural impossibility; a thing for which there is no possibility whatever of accounting, but by the strictly extraordinary action of the pure will of the Living God Almighty.

If there had been in the universe no free agency of man or other being, but simply a universal reign of physical law, then it would have been ideally possible for an *infinite intelligence*, once a creature universe is in a germ of being, to forecast the whole history of that universe,—through insight of what is there in the seed, giving foresight of all that there can ever be of bud and blossom and fruit. But even Omniscience could not *so* forecast the resurrection of one body. For the resurrection is not an evolution from the existing state and course of things. On the contrary,—it is a revolution resulting from successful insurrection against the state and course of things. The state and course of things is, mortality:—but now, “mortality is swallowed up of life.”

2. *As to the utterance* of the prediction. The core of the question is, whether *in fact* it was uttered beforehand, so as to preclude the possibility of imposture. The evidence of the fact of resurrection will be examined by us carefully under the head of external evidences of the truth of Bible religion (Bk. ii. chap. ii.). For the present we restrict ourselves to the *fact of the prediction* of it.

Of the fact of the prediction, we have seen, the enemies of Christ furnished a clear proof, both in their vain attempts to prevent the fulfilment of it, and in the use which they made of it to murder Him by false witness, and to torture Him with insult in His death. The two enigmatical predictions (John ii. 19 ; Matt. xii. 40), one near the beginning of His public ministry and one near its close, were publicly uttered. And though three clear predictions in the closing period of His ministry, mainly in Galilee, were uttered to the disciples apart, yet we do not find that there was, as in the case of the transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 9), any prohibition to divulge what thus became known to them. The probability is, that the matter was well enough known in the community of those interested ; although it was not a meet subject of preaching until after the great event. The disciples appear to have been dumb-stricken with the terror of the catastrophe impending, so as not to feel free to question Christ ; and to have been bewildered about the resurrection, not knowing what to think. That, however, does not lie directly in our way at present. The question on our straight way is, Whether *in fact* the prediction was uttered, and how ? The number of persons who were admitted to the knowledge of it is not of importance in our present question.

The addition made by John (ii. 19) of the utterance, "destroy this temple," is important as showing that the matter, though not preached about by Christ, *was intimated by Him near the beginning of His ministry*. Renan thinks that Christ had not thought of dying as a way of terminating His ministry, until He came to see that the ministry was a failure. History says, that near the beginning of it He had intimated that there was to be for Him a violent death at the end of it. On the other enigmatical utterance about "the sign of Jonas," we now need make no further observation. There thus remain *the three clear utterances* which were made to His disciples. And in these we see what must now engage our attention,—namely, along with the resurrection in the prediction, *detailed circumstances of the sufferings*.

The *last* of the three utterances had most of these details. It alone is recorded by all the three Synoptists (Matt. xx. 19 ; Mark x. 34 ; Luke xviii. 32). It took place when they had set out on their way from Galilee in the last journey to Jerusalem. This was some little time after the Transfiguration. It was

about the stage of the Great Ministry represented by Luke's description (ix. 51-46): "*When the time was come* that He should be delivered up, He set His face stedfastly to go to Jerusalem." The *second* of the utterances is noticed only by Matthew (xvii. 22), with no detail but of the *betrayal*, and an intimation that the utterance was "while they abode in Galilee," and that it made the disciples very sorrowful. A notice of similar vagueness is found in Mark (ix. 31), with a reference to "passing through Galilee" in a *private* manner. The *first* of the utterances, recorded by Matthew (xvi. 21) and Luke (ix. 22), has a number of main details, and is otherwise made impressive by connection. Matters had come to a crisis. Christ asked His disciples the searching question, Who or what *they* supposed Him to be? Peter answered with the Great Confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Christ thereupon showed them how much it would cost a man to be faithful to that creed. But He began with telling them how much it was to cost Himself. It is here that there came that first utterance of our prediction. Peter rebuked Him, and was himself rebuked most terribly. The Transfiguration came a week after, with Moses and Elias, in Peter's hearing, speaking to Christ (Mark ix. 4) about "His *exodus* ('decease') which He was destined (*ἐμελλε*) to accomplish at Jerusalem." It was a short period, in the advancing shadow of the Cross. The prediction was emitted at short intervals, so that it must have been the great matter on their minds (as if "the time was come" in Luke meant, *the passing bell* was tolling). The resurrection was, by means of it, kept before them, not as a mere escape from death, but as a consequent upon that *offering* of life which (Matt. xx. 28) was the purpose for which Christ had *come*. And if the Transfiguration was heaven's ringing of the bell, the answering on His part was thus, repeatedly at intervals, "Lo, I come! to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. x. 1-5).

We exclude from our view what took place at Jerusalem during the closing week, including the great predictions (John xiii.-xvii.) regarding Christ Himself, as well as those regarding His Church, and the Jews, and the world. Restricting our attention to this one thing in hand, in that short period in Galilee, we see that there is no possibility whatever of mistake as to the fact that Jesus did clearly, plainly, repeatedly if not frequently, with perfectly unmistakable distinctness—at a distance from the theatre of the great catastrophe, in the calmness of conversation with His select disciples, and in a manner which made obliteration from their

memory impossible—foretell His resurrection on the third day after His death.

The utterances, as reported by the evangelists, are plainly from recollection of the words which were spoken by Christ Himself. Exegetically it might be interesting to endeavour to make out what it may have been in the case of the various historians that determined the selection of the details which are preserved in the respective evangelical accounts of those utterances. But for our purpose the one point for observation is *the fact*, brought into our knowledge, that the prediction included, not barely the substantive event of resurrection, but that specification of details in connection with the sufferings.

These details really form a part of the prediction. They refer to a humiliation and sufferings to which Christ, in predicting them, showed that He was *freely devoting Himself*. And constituting, as they thus do, a programme of what He was undertaking to suffer, they illustrate *the love of Christ*, by showing what was in His heart to undergo for the wicked race that so abused Him. They show that all through the closing period He was mentally passing through that humiliation beforehand; that “this cup” was never absent from His lip. But the wondrous pathos of that protracted passion we will not dwell upon in a debate.

What falls to be marked and emphasised in the fact of the details is, as it were, *a horoscope*—calculated from the “nativity” of the Son of man, Matt. xx. 28—*of the closing part of the humiliation of Christ*. It is surely the most profoundly interesting horoscope that was ever drawn. The evangelists, in preserving so many distinct details of the prediction, have done good service to the cause of man as well as God by perpetuating the vivid illustration of the grace of Him who “for our sakes became poor.” But the value of the service is not duly acknowledged by us unless we effectively make the right apologetic use of it—through emphatic recognition and strenuous application of the fact that these details, while corroborating the impression of the substantive prediction of His resurrection, at the same time themselves contain, in connection with the history of the sufferings which fulfilled them, a powerful supplementary evidence of prophecy, in the form of manifest prediction of the incalculable.

As to the details in the *first* utterance:—*Matthew* and *Luke* have in common the fact that the sufferings were to be at the hand of *the chief priests and elders and scribes*. Separately,—we find in *Matthew* that *Jerusalem* is to be the theatre of the event; and in *Luke* (characteristically) Jesus is named *the Son of man*, and is to be *rejected*. These details in the first utterance constitute the *outlines* of a complete view. In the last of the three clear utterances a number of secondary details are added, filling up that outline. These *additional details* are the following:—*the crucifixion, the betrayal, the formal condemnation* by the religious leaders, *delivering Him to the Gentiles, the scourging, the mocking, the spitting* (ah! what is man?). This last detail is given by *Luke*, and also by *Mark*, who strikingly states (ver. 32), “They were in the way, going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed; and they that followed were afraid.” *Matthew* alone has *the crucifixion*. But at the time of the *first* utterance the *Cross* was introduced in that warning, reported by all the Synoptists, which Christ gave to disciples who will come after Him, that they must be prepared to deny themselves, and *take up their Cross and follow Him*. The Cross was in His warning at an earlier period (Matt. x. 38). And that may have pointed His reference (John iii. 14) to the brazen serpent as “*lifted up*,” and His expressions (xii. 32), “I, if I be *lifted up*, will draw all men to me;” “When ye have *lifted up* the Son of man, ye shall know that I am He” (viii. 28).

The resurrection is a sunrise that hides the stars. But they continue to exist, and can be made to show their evidencing light. Regarding these details of mourning, the present question is, Do *they* show prediction of the incalculable? In relation to that question, they may be very important, though they should be of no importance in themselves. The circumstance of *crucifixion* is of some real importance; because it has in itself a distinct evidence of prophecy (Gal. iii. 13) and type (John xix. 36); also because it really enters into the vital history of the last days of the Great Ministry—days of which the like can never again be seen in the universe. Crucifixion was a *Roman* mode of punishing with death. The *Jewish* mode, followed in Stephen’s case, was stoning. The incoherent action of the religious leaders, in desperately pressing for a civil condemnation, though (cp. Acts xxii. 4) they had the power of death, and actually passed a sentence inferring death (John xix. 7), this action, as of men “willing to wound,

and yet afraid to strike," was, no doubt, quite natural, as also would have been fifty *other* kinds of action. But who could have *foreseen* that *this* was to be *the one*?

The crucifixion as a Roman punishment perhaps carried along with it the *scourging*, if not also the *mocking*; though they were not so clearly certain accompaniments as to have made it safe in guess-work to foretell them with such clear distinctness. The *betrayal* is, in the prediction and otherwise (cp. John xiii. 1, etc.; cp. vi. 64, xviii. 2, 5), too distinct for a calculation upon human baseness, which had *various conceivable* ways of working. The *death* itself was not inevitable. There is not one of the circumstances that was not really incalculable in the relevant sense, that no human sagacity could have foreseen it as inevitable; for in fact there *was* not one of them inevitable. As to the whole of them,—the occurrence of them all according to the prediction was not only utterly beyond all conceivable calculation: it was in the last degree unlikely. Only a mathematician can tell, on calculation of probabilities, the "chances" *against* the combination in that one event of these few simple circumstances. Practically, the expression for the improbability is "infinity." The forecast of the occurrence of them all was competent only to Omniscience. One of them is mentioned by Mark and the Gentile evangelist Luke. The middle-class Hebrew, Matthew, dwelling in a town, may not have felt it as very strange, being familiar with what is possible in zealotry of religion for "the malice of a Jew." There are some things like it in the writings of a "brilliant scholar" of that race. There is only one thing—at the trial of Charles I.—bearing any shadow of remote resemblance to the baseness of it in all English history. Luke may, with that humanity of cultured nature which is so fine a flavour in his writings, have been reluctant to record a thing so disgraceful to humanity. But Christ foretold it, and Luke and Mark record it. Surely it is for our learning, that a human being *spat upon* the Son of man! That may help us to see how dearly He must have loved mankind, who, *foreseeing* such an outrage, yet, in foretelling it, showed that He was resolved to undergo it at the hand of sinners for their sakes. Perhaps there has not been in history another illustration so appalling of the fall of man

from uprightness. But on that account it is for us at present all the better for the demonstration of the fact that in connection with the sufferings there was prediction of the incalculable. For, though, since it has happened, we can barely believe it on the assurance strong of Holy Writ, surely beforehand, the *certain occurrence of such a thing*, though there had been collected there all the scum of the fallen humanity of all ages, could not have been *calculated upon*, so as to found a prediction on it, by any creature, not even by the devil who entered into the traitor's heart.

Did Christ know that He was to suffer in that manner— with those circumstances? Either He did, or He did not. If He *did not* know them, how did He happen to foretell them? The suggestion, if considered for a moment, is seen to be an inconceivable practical absurdity. It is impossible for the mind so much as to take it in for consideration, as if it were said that black is white, or that two and two make five. *Did He know?* If He did, He knew what *could* be known only to Almighty God; and Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, who says with truth, "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep."

SEC. 4. *His works: evidence of miracle.*

Miracle is now felt as being the central matter in the question of the truth of Christianity, while "the works of Christ" are the central ground for study of the Apologetic question as to miracle. The question as to miracle branches into three:—1. Is miracle a proof of doctrine? 2. Is it extraordinary, supernatural? 3. Has it a moral character evincing its truth? Of course it would be impossible to debate every one of these questions in connection with every one of the thirty miracles of Gospel history. And it would frustrate the purpose of the history of them, as well as involve an abandonment of our historical method, and of the advantages of that method. Still, adhering to that method, we shall endeavour to allow the history to explain itself. That is to say, we shall endeavour to see what really is *the representation* made in this narrative regarding miracle, with

reference to the above three questions, respectively, as to the Apologetic design of miracle, as to its physical nature, and as to the criterion of its truth. That will be the appropriate study at this central stage of our historical inquiry. For the sake of the advantages of its direct simplicity, we must scorn the delights of more ambitious speculation, and undergo some labour of direct and downright consideration of the matter as it appears in history.

(1.) *We will place ourselves on the ground of Gospel history.*

In the second century there was no question of the reality of the miracles of Christ. Even the baby Christians of Strauss dreamed themselves into believing in the reality of those mighty works, which also were believed in by the forger martyr saints of Baur. The Jews confessed belief in them by ascribing them to demons; as also did Celsus, by explaining that Christ worked them by a natural magic which he had learned in Egypt (in *his* infancy?). This prevalent belief in those miracles, a century after the death of Jesus, especially among those to whom the question as to the fact of them had been one of life or death, is important in the whole historical question as to the reality of them. But in our present exercise upon the Gospel history of miracle we shall disregard that second-century belief in their reality.

On the other hand, we will not be influenced by the circumstance, that the primitive apology does not give to miracle that place of commanding importance which we now feel to be its due. The primitive Christians, living very much in the Old Testament Scriptures, were greatly under influence of the evidence of prophecy: partly as constituted by miraculous prediction, whose fulfilment had so wondrously taken place in their time; and partly also, as being found in a new superhuman wisdom, manifested in that clear coherent view of God, the world, and man, which to their apprehension was vividly illustrated by contrast with the helpless darkness, relatively to the real questions of true life, of the heathen religions and philosophies. This more inward tendency, which made their apology have an aspect of "testimony," was

strengthened by their peculiarly deep experience of the internal evidence, of the first fulness in wondering joy of the new life which Christ has brought into the world: an experience which is not in equal measure felt in Apologetic now; partly, because the religion is not now so unworldly as it once was in realisation on the part of believers; and partly, because in a sense the world is less worldly, being pervaded with those heavenly ideas which make "Christian civilisation," so that an infidel assault on Christianity is like a maniac in the sunlight striving to drag the sun down from the firmament. Further, the subject itself was, so to speak, handicapped by the prevalent belief in heathen miracles and other supernaturalism, which derogated from the felt force of the Christian miracle as evidence. In our day, rational mankind is represented by the Glasgow artisan who said, "Show me that there is a God, and I'll *grab at* your Bible;" and there is hardly an intelligent man to whom one clear case of miracle would not be proof of the being of a God. Thus, everything of supernaturalism that is believed in among us by some men is on the side of Christ. But in those days, whatever of religion there was in the heathen "religious" was a force of supernaturalism against the gospel. And that supernaturalism without God, which has been exemplified in Christendom by our "spiritualism" and the preceding infamous Black Arts, was then not only widely prevalent but puissant; it had some hold even upon the mind of "philosophers," or educated class,—for nature abhors a void; and among the uneducated it made a career for the vile *göctæ*, dabblers and traffickers in supernaturalism who might (or might not) be educated themselves.—All which we will now remember only as things to be now forgotten, the distinct oblivion of them defining more precisely—as in *chiaro oscuro*—that historical appearance, of miracle in the Gospel history, on which our attention is to be concentrated.

At the middle of the first century we have historically found among Christians a universally prevalent full belief in the reality of miracles, not only as having been performed by Christ in the sight of witnesses then alive in the prime of life, but also as being performed then by the apostles as 'the signs' of their apostleship, and occasionally by others

according to the will of God. The fact of that universal Christian belief in miracles, which we found in A.D. 60 as a thing that was then in maturity of life, we will hold as unquestionable; by the same tenure of historical right by which Baur holds the fact, that all Christians, from the first moment of the existence of Christianity in germ, believed in the transcendent miracle of the resurrection of Christ. And that fact we shall (Bk. ii. chap. ii.) employ as an argument in proof of the reality of the miracles of Christ, or of the reality of supernatural revelation of God in His ministry. But at present we look at that state of belief in the middle of the century only as a thing to be passed by us in our way to undivided concentration of attention on the history of those wondrous works before A.D. 34.

* In the clear light of that middle period, A.D. 34-67, we historically found that the New Testament Scriptures are a trustworthy source of information regarding the earthly ministry of Christ. We regard ourselves as being placed, alongside of the primæval Christians of that period, in the clear light of history, upon historic ground, listening along with them to Paul and to the twelve. We hold that it would be unhistorical and irrational not to accept these Scriptures in our hands as an authentic representation of the testimony regarding Christ which was delivered to the world by those who (Luke i. 2; 1 John i. 3) "from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word" (Acts i. 21, 22; Luke xxiv. 46-48). And, in particular, we accept, in deference to the just authority of literary history, the four Gospels, of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, as containing the apostolic testimony regarding the history of the earthly ministry of Christ. In the following chapter (ii.) of this Book (ii.) we will deal with the question, whether these witnesses are to be trusted in their representation of the facts which they profess to have seen and heard. But at present we simply regard this as the representation which they made (cp. 2 Pet. i. 16-18). That is to say, recognising the Gospels as equivalent to the original witness-bearing of the apostles regarding the works and words of Jesus of Nazareth, we will make a study of the Gospel representation as to His miracles, their purpose, their nature, and their moral character.

And we remark in passing, that the study has real interest for even those who do not with us hold the authenticity of the Gospel history to be established historically. They have an interest in considering the representation which those Gospels make as to miracles; because that is one important means of judging as to *the reasonableness of Christianity*.

The objection to miracle, on the ground of its being *impossible*, we will disregard as incompetent in a really historical inquiry. If the thing be a fact, its being impossible will only show to us that it is an extraordinary work of God; since God alone can do things that are naturally impossible. The apostles, and those who heard them, believed in the possibility of miracles; and what we are now about to consider is, the representation made by those witnesses to their hearers, in the name of God, regarding miracles of Jesus as a fact.

We also will avoid the snare of the objection on the ground of *experience*; there cannot have been miracles, for experience tells us that there are not any. Only, as this objection is somewhere in sight of our present exercise, we will make a prelusory note on its irrationalism. *What* experience? Or *whose*? Is it our own personal experience? What *we* have seen and heard? Then what is the use of listening to witnesses in *any* case? In cases of life and death, in relation to all serious matters of man's business on earth, "at the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." It is on the strength of such testimony that we believe that there was a battle of Waterloo, that there is a city of Pekin, that arsenic is a poison. A man on trial for his life who objects to the exculpatory evidence, on the ground that the judge and jury ought not to consider evidence but that of their own eyes and ears, is on the way to be answered by the hangman. For to reject the evidence of trustworthy witnesses is fatal in our human life, because irrational, blind.

Our experience does not show that there are not miracles. What it shows is, that there are not miracles in our experience. Of course there are not, otherwise they could not be miracles. A miracle is a "wonder" of "extraordinary" supernaturalism, outside of the common course of experience. But surely it is irrational to disbelieve in a thing outside of

this experience, because it is not inside of it. A man's life depends on the proof of an *alibi*, his having been in China at a certain time. The judge and jury say, there is no need of any trial: the man is plainly guilty, *we* did not see him in China at that time (they never were in China). If his counsel object, that he has twelve witnesses ready to swear that they saw this man in China, and lived with him there three years, the counsel for the prosecution answers, that he has thirty millions of witnesses, namely, all the people of England, Scotland, and Ireland, who did *not* see the man in China at that time!

What really speaks in this objection is, not experience, on the solid ground of knowledge, but inexperience, in a hollow presumption of ignorance. Twelve expert naturalists declare upon oath that in a certain place and time they have seen black swans, and studied them in the interests of natural history for three years. The commonalty of mankind have seen only white swans. That does not place the experience of mankind against the naturalists. The only experience of mankind in the matter is, the observation of black swans by those naturalists. The commonalty of mankind were not in that place at the time. Any one who refuses to believe in black swans is, on the strength of ignorant experience, rejecting the skilled experience of mankind.

Men who ought to know what they are speaking about say, that in human experience, of their own eyes and ears, there have been things which we know to be naturally impossible. That alleged experience has been at the beginning of religion: the building or launching of the ship, which now has long been sailing:—a beginning with Moses in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt; and a beginning with Jesus Christ in the salvation of His people from their sins. In the days of Elias, an Israelite objects on behalf of Baal or of Mammon, *I* have had no experience of miracles. The answer is—Of course you have not, for you were not there. Israel was there, and saw: witness the Passover, and the happy freedom of this land, if we were grateful. A civilised man of our new time, who says that *he* has seen no miracle, can be answered only in the same way to begin with. The only Gospel wonder to be seen in our day is the one recorded in Mark vi. 6. Otherwise, there is Christendom,

with its memorial ordinances; and there are the apostles, who were on the spot, and saw, and heard.

If any one say that his experience tells him that a miracle is impossible, we still will inquire, what was the apostolic experience as to fact?

(2.) First, *the miracle is a proof that Jesus is the Christ of God.*

Paul, who was not one of the companions of the earthly ministry of Christ, is not found offering, in proof of Christianity, any evidence but that of the Old Testament prophecy (Acts xvii. 3), and that of the resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 1-8), of whose reality Paul was personally a witness. The other apostles, too, made that resurrection their grand point of demonstration. But they also alleged the miracles Christ had performed before His death. The only notes we have of a full apostolic declaration of "the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. i. 16), are those which are given in the Acts of the true "foundation" discourses of Peter at the first original planting of the Church, respectively, among the Jews (Acts ii.) and among the Gentiles (Acts x.). These two discourses are the fundamental *pronunciamento* of Christianity to the world. From the report of them it appears that the apostle may not have spoken about the teaching of Christ. He is reported only as having spoken of His works. And what his reported statements bring to view in relation to His works is, that they were miraculous. This appears even in the address to Cornelius and his friends, the first-fruits of Gentilism to Christendom. While ascribing to those works a general character of beneficence, the address particularises only what is distinctly miraculous (Acts x. 38)—"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him." But this point had been brought out with great solemnity in the relative part of the Jerusalem address on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 22): "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know."

It thus appears that the apostles regarded His miracles as

evidence of His being the Saviour Son of God ; and also, since they professed to be simply carrying out His instructions, that they represent this view of the miracles as having been given by Him to them, to be made known as from Him to mankind. But for us the apostolic testimony regarding His earthly ministry is appropriately, not in the Acts, the Bible history of new creation by the Holy Ghost, but in the four Gospels, the Bible history of the work of the Son of God on earth.

The history shows us that among the Jews, at the time of His coming, there was an expectation of miracle, to be done by any one claiming to be the Messiah, in attestation of his claim. This is of some importance ; because it might aid us in determining the meaning of His own intimations regarding the matter, if that meaning be otherwise not clear. We therefore note the fact, that in one place (John vi. 30, 31) the Jews are found *requesting* that Jesus should show a “sign,” as Moses had given the heavenly manna to their fathers ; in another (John iii. 2), a master in Israel *reasons*, that Jesus is shown by His miracles (“signs”) to be a teacher from God ; and in yet another (John vii. 25–31), when the Jerusalem leaders are turning against Him, the people continue to *trust Him*, on the ground of the reason implied in the question, “When the Christ cometh, will He do more miracles (“signs”) than this man hath done ?”

We now look to the declarations which Christ Himself made regarding the purpose of His miracles. His use of words regarding this subject we have already noted in connection with the whole class of New Testament words for miracle. Generally, He speaks of His own miracles as His “works” (ἔργα).

The name of *terror* (τρέμας) He never gives to His works ; and He employs it only twice (John iv. 48 ; Matt. xxiv. 24). The name descriptive of *power* (δυνάμεις) He employs for description of His own works only once (Matt. xi. 20–23), when reproaching men who had not repented on occasion of them. The descriptive word which He employs as appropriate in relation to His own works is “signs” (σημεῖα). It is illustrated by what He says of Himself (John vi. 27), “Him hath God the Father sealed ;” and also by what He says of one of His works (Luke xi. 20), “If I by the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God has come upon you.” It thus appears that

He would have His miracles to be regarded as a *demonstration of the divinity of His religion*; a demonstration characterised by *visibly pointed significance*.

His own express statements, with reference to His miracles collectively or as a whole, are found at the close of His ministry, at the close of the ministry of the Baptist, and at the beginning of His own preaching at Nazareth. At the close of His ministry, He said to His disciples (John xiv. 10, 11), "The words which I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father which dwelleth in me, He doeth the works" (Revised Version, "the Father dwelling in me doeth His works"). "Believe *me*, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else, believe me for the very works' sake." And also (John xv. 10) regarding those who had not believed—"If I had not done the works among them which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father." Here He makes His miracles to be *a ground of faith* in Him as one with the Father, *so as to leave unbelief without excuse*. Both at the beginning of His preaching at Nazareth (Luke iv. 16-31) and at the close of the ministry of the Baptist (Matt. xi. 1-23), He applied to Himself the Isaian prediction of Messiah in Isa. lxi. 1; where "anointed" is the Hebrew word *Messiah*, of which the Greek is *Christ*. To the people of Nazareth, when He had read the words, He said, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your hearing." In His answer to John's disciples, He made pointed reference to the *miracles* which are in that prediction assigned to the Messiah; pointing to His own works, which accompanied the preaching of the gospel to the poor, and of which His catalogue begins with giving sight to the blind, and ends with raising the dead. Matthew's expression, "When John had heard in the prison *the work of Christ* (lit. 'of the Christ')," is not in the historical manner of His Gospel; in which "the Christ" is not employed as a proper name of Jesus, but as a theological description of His office as Messiah. Matthew seems here to put into his statement what may have been in the mind of the Baptist, as if what had been reported to him were "miracles of the Messiah." John's question through His disciples, "Art thou the coming one?" has an emphasis of posi-

tion on the personal pronoun *thou*. The question is, pointedly, are *you* the coming Christ of God? And the pointed answer of Jesus, with a reference to Isa. lxi. 1, is, His miracles.

After the departure of John's disciples, He pointed His miracles to the same effect (vers. 20-23) against "the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done." This is the only occasion on which *He* gives to them the name of power, "mighty works." It manifestly is for the purpose of pointing out the inexcusableness of the obduracy of those cities. Not only they had hardened their hearts against the law and the prophets, all the way down to John, than whom there never was a greater among the prophets; they had even resisted the *powerful works* done among them—woe to them! woe to them! Here again we see, as at the close of His ministry, so in the course of it, as far back as the beginning of it, His miracles represented by Himself as a visible demonstration of His title to be received as Jehovah's Christ, a demonstration so clear and strong that unbelief is manifested obduracy most woful. Others of His express statements will appear in particular cases.

We now look at cases illustrative of the view that was taken of the miracles by the Apostolic witnesses. For illustration we will take the narratives of *the two Cana miracles*, which apparently are given by John for the purpose of illustration of the *rationale* of miracle in relation to the saving office of Christ as "the word of life" (1 John i. 1, 3). Our version of the narratives is inaccurate at two points affecting the right understanding of them. The Greek of John ii. 11 is rendered literally, "This the beginning of the signs,"—which marks this particular miracle as a decisively significant inauguration of this kind of work on the part of Jesus. And of John iv. 54, the meaning is, that on this occasion Jesus performed at Cana *a* miracle, which was the second there; or that He now worked a second *Cana* miracle. Between the two, he had returned from Judea to Galilee, and in Judea had performed other miracles, apparently not a few. Thus (John iii. 1, 2) Nicodemus had become convinced by His miracles that He was a teacher from God; and the evangelist places at a point before that the general statement (ii. 23), "When He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast, many

believed in His name when they saw the miracles which He did." Here, between the two Cana works, we see the miracles operative among the Jews to the effect of leading them to believe in Jesus as a teacher from God. Still, the two Cana works are to be regarded as connected, not only by the accident of their occurring in one place, but by their having a special community of nature.

The *first Cana* miracle was in the first week of the public ministry of Christ. John the Baptist (John i. 27, etc.) had solemnly proclaimed Jesus as "the Lamb of God," and reminded his hearers that he had previously, on a great occasion, borne him witness, by divine direction as "the Son of God." To Cana John was accompanied by "disciples;" doubtless for the purpose of their afterwards bearing witness; and probably (John i. 29, etc.) including those Galilean fishermen who (Luke v. 1-11) were soon after formally called away from their fishing to be the innermost circle of the trusted followers of Christ in His ministry. The effect of the miracle is now described by one of these as having been twofold—(1) Jesus "manifested His glory;" and (2) "His disciples believed on Him." That is to say, the miracle was in effect a ground of belief through its being a manifestation of His glory; or, in other words, it manifested His glory to the effect of their believing on Him.

The "glory" is (John i. 14, cp. vers. 1-3) that of the Eternal Word, who is God, and who "was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." To this John adds: "and *we beheld* His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father." And here, on occasion of the first of His miracles, we see *how they came to* "behold His glory." It was through "manifestation" of it in the miracle. The miracle thus is a *manifestation*, through sensible sign, of a natively invisible glory. Thus of the incarnation it is said (John i. 18), "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." But apparently the incarnate God is veiled by the flesh He has assumed. And the miracle is so far an unveiling, such as (2 Cor. iii. 18) will be completed in the resurrection, "when Christ was glorified" (John vii. 39, xii. 16).

As to the believing, we observe that these men, "disciples," have already believed on Him. The first believing, into which they may have been led by the ministry of the Baptist, is here followed by a second believing, into which they are led by the miracle. We need not suppose that their first believing was

only to the effect simply that He was a teacher from God, and that the second believing is to the further effect that He is the Messiah or Christ. We may suppose, simply, that the second believing is a sealing or confirmation of the faith which they had before, now stamped or sealed by the miracle. In any case, the miracle here again appears as a *ground of belief* in Christ.

The *second Cana* miracle (John iv. 46-54) is, in connection with our present inquiry, specially interesting, as again bringing into view a first and a second believing. On this occasion Christ (ver. 48) employs the word of *terror* (τῆρας) for description of a miracle, in such a manner as to show that the terror may be instrumental in *driving* those who are hard-hearted into belief. But what we mark especially is the movement in the nobleman's mind. His first believing, upon the word of Christ, is for the healing of his child. His second believing, upon the healing work of Christ, a believing in which he is accompanied by his household, is a giving himself over to Christ as a disciple. Here still the miracle appears as a ground of belief.

But in this case the miracle appears in a new light. It is wrought upon condition of the first believing. And this, where the nature of the case will permit, we find characterising the course of miracles of mercy. Not only they are a ground of faith: faith is a condition of their being performed. Even where there cannot be the faith in reality, as, *e.g.*, in the case of Lazarus, the fever, the stormy sea, there is the form of prescribing or commanding. And where the nature of the case permits, the healing of the body is received, like the healing of the soul (cp. Acts xvi. 31). This appears more vividly in the Greek than in the English; because the Greek for *salvation* (σώζεις θάι) for the soul also has the meaning of *healing* for the body (cp. Latin *salvus*: "holiness" is "health"). At Lystra (Acts xiv. 9) Paul saw that the cripple "*had faith* to be healed." Christ said to the woman healed of the issue of blood, "*Thy faith hath made thee whole*" (Matt. ix. 22). Elsewhere (*e.g.* the pathetic case, Mark ix. 33, 34) faith is prescribed or described as the way to the benefit. And we note the memorable illustration of contrast in Mark vi. 5, 6, where there is the strange expression, "*He could not* there do any mighty work (οὐδὲμίαν, *not one*), because of their unbelief: save that He laid His hands on a few impotent folks, and healed them. And He *marvelled* at their unbelief."

We pause for a little on this statement of Mark (or Peter—"his speech bewrayeth him"). The "*marvelling*" makes the only "*marvel*" (θαῦμα) to be the people's unbelief. His "*marvelling*" may mean, He *observed* that marvel in them. His

inability may be only, not lack of physical power, but not having *freedom* in this case. As the Christ He was "under the law," "became obedient," acted as Commissioner of the God-head; and His commission ran, that the benefit was to be conferred upon condition of faith. It was "in His own country." The people might be kept from believing by the thought that a common person really could not do anything uncommon. Or they might be past believing by presumption, imagining (Luke iv. 16-31) that the benefit would be conferred on them in favouritism. Grace has no favourites. Faith looks for no partiality, but throws itself at the feet of sovereign mercy. In any case, where the faith is not, *He cannot* overstep His commission to bestow the gift of grace in no other case than where men are prepared to receive it in faith.

We thus perceive that, besides the evidential use of miracle, it may have a use of *instruction*, as a physical process illustrating spiritual things by analogy; a use of *discipline* for believers; and a use of *trial* for all. But the fundamental use, without which even the other use could not be served, is that of evidence. It is not a mere *monstrum*, but a "sign," with a pointed "finger" of demonstration,—demonstration which is not only indication, but proof.

(3.) Second, *miracle is in its essential nature "extraordinary," supernatural.*

The "extraordinariness" (as already stated) is the real essential characteristic. The word "supernatural" has in these discussions frequently the meaning of extraordinary. But ordinary providence is in a real sense supernatural. And human free agency is supernatural in the sense of, distinct in kind from physical nature.

Supernatural is not necessarily unnatural or monstrous. Even the terrific wonders of Egypt were to a large extent on the lines of nature, though wonderful in respect of prolongation of those lines, or of intensification of processes upon them. And in conformity with Old Testament prescription for the new time,—“a king's face should give grace,”—the miracles of Jesus do not show “the terrors of Jehovah,” the “man of war.” As He does not give them the name of “terrific thing,” so His “works” have an aspect of quiet naturalness which prevents our being startled by the wonder

of them, as the "glory" of His Godhead was veiled by His flesh. Still, the essence of His evidential "work" is wonder, extraordinariness. All providence is supernatural: it is the *extra-ordinary* that makes the pointed "finger of God."

Baur and others tell us that there can be nothing extraordinary, but only absolute continuity, as prescribed by Hegel and others. We know that perfectly well. Not only the Chinese have known it long; Peter had heard it from the atheists of his day (2 Pet. iii. 4). They reasoned themselves out of every "gap" into absolute continuity from experience,—"Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the creation of the world." The creation may occasion a puzzle to Zeno about the possibility of motion. Peter found deliverance from the atheistic difficulty about providence in the fact of creation. Moses may find a new proof of creation in supernatural redemption. But we are at present inquiring historically, and will not go back to these remote beginnings. Knickerbocker, in his *History of New York*, began with the cosmogonies; because if the world had not originated, New York would not have existed. True. But we will not at present go back to the cosmogonies.

We own that a thing really extraordinary in our present sense of the term is a natural impossibility. But the apostles believed in God, with whom all things are possible. Laws of nature were, to their apprehension, statutes of Jehovah. They regarded the fixity of things as established by His *will*, and thus dependent on His pleasure (Rev. iv. 11). They were not aware of anything that can hinder Him from suspending the operation of those laws, or bringing some new force into action, if that at any time should be His will. As for those philosophers who are not aware of the being of a God, they, of course, are not acquainted with His will. But they at least might know that there is a will of man. It was not in consequence of the fixed laws of physical nature, but in the exercise of a *will*, which thus is a really supernatural thing, that Baur delivered lectures about absolute continuity, and Renan wrote books on the footing of there being no supernatural. However, it is not the philosophers that we now are examining about their speculations as to possibility, but the

apostles about their experience of fact. Those things which they saw and heard in the earthly ministry of Christ, are they, if they existed in fact, extraordinary, supernatural?

In the words of Christ about His miracles which we have considered, there are allusions to the *greatness*, or to the *numerousness*, or other *unexampled* character, of *His* works. And Mark in his strange statement (vi. 5) seems to think that the healing of a few impotent folks is not worth naming with the full name of a "mighty work." There is a verbal distinction, which will be convenient for our use in the present exercise, between "greater" and "minor" works of Christ. We will make use of the distinction to the provisional effect of meaning as follows: (1) By "greater" work we will mean, one of which the miraculousness—in the sense of extraordinary supernaturalism—is unquestionable. The works of this class recorded in the Gospels are, turning water into wine, feeding thousands with a few loaves and fishes, walking on the sea, giving sight to the born blind, raising the dead. Of about thirty miracles detailed in the Gospels, there are about ten which may be reckoned of this class. (2) The remainder are works of healing and of exorcism (we do not place the blighting of the fig-tree), which we will provisionally speak of as "minor" works, because about this or that one of them, if it had stood alone, there might be a doubt whether it is a real miracle, or whether it may not be simply an astonishing work of "ordinary providence." We shall begin with those "greater works" on which the light is clear, in the hope that the light of them may be helpful for ulterior study of what is less clear.

1. *As to the "greater" works.* It has been suggested that miracle is something like the blossoming of an American aloe, which takes place only once in a century; so that the actual work, though ostensibly extraordinary, shall be really not supernatural, but only a result of natural forces or laws which have been imperceptibly maturing into this result. It was not an American aloe blossom that Moses saw shining in the Bush of his wilderness. The clumsy introduction of nature into that work would have instantly extinguished the light of its evidence. So of the Transfiguration, the Damascus appearance to Paul, etc. The very thought of explaining the "work"

into process of nature is in the mind an abandonment of miracle as truly extraordinary, a thought which may some day appear as an apple blossom of Sodom. In construction of the "greater" works of Christ, we see that the thought is an incoherent stupidity. Instead of the *status questionis*,—"Who sinned, this man or his parents?" it would give the inquiry, May not some redeeming Immanuel, a century before, have planted an American aloe-seed of miracle in the blind man's great-grandparents? As for the dead who are raised, the multiplication of the bread, the walking on the sea, we are not able even to imagine how a question can be framed about an aloe wonder of nature. Perhaps as to the first Cana miracle, it might be asked whether the aloe that was planted may not, in the natural course of a century, have turned into a vine? But this does not seem to make the matter clear. And it would not have led the disciples to believe, nor have manifested the glory of Christ. Niebuhr speaks of it as an important rule for historians to write *as if the thing had taken place*. Some theologians write as if the thing had *not* taken place. It is a relief to turn from them to those who were eye-witnesses when the thing *was* taking place, and who assure us that they are not following "cunningly devised fables."

With reference to giving sight to the blind at Jericho, it seems impossible now to make out with warrantable confidence whether two men received their sight on Christ's leaving the city (Matt. xx. 29-34), or whether only Bartimæus was healed on His leaving the city (Matt. x. 46-52), and (Luke xviii. 35-43) another on His entering it. It is in Matthew's manner (see our notes on Magdalene and the "women" on the resurrection morning, Bk. ii. 2nd 4), to speak of what happened to one of a class as happening to the class indefinitely. But the appearance of discrepancy in the narratives cannot be explained away: the key is lost. That does not affect our inquiry as to the truth of Christianity, or as to the evidence of miracle. So far as miracle is concerned, the evidence is the same, whether one man only was healed, at either the entrance or the exit, or if a thousand had been healed at the entrance and a thousand at the exit. All the Synoptists place here a work, of *giving sight to the blind*, which was accompanied with details of a peculiarly memorable character of pathetic dramatic interest, and which took place in sight and hearing of a great river or sea of eagerly interested population, streaming toward Jerusalem on the occasion of this

most memorable Passover. No doubt Christ was watched with keen eyes. The occasion was memorable to many for all their lifetime after. The reality of the substantive fact, of a healing on that occasion, is perfectly clear. Otherwise this Jericho healing is the only one of which the narrative is perplexing.

Blindness was, and is, an affliction far more common in the lands of the Bible than it is in Western Christendom. Of the twelve miracles which might be placed as "greater" works of Christ, no fewer than four are works of *healing the blind*. Only one of the four, that one of the man *born blind*, is plainly a "greater" work unmistakable at first glance; for only a medical expert can be sure that the three other cases were not naturally curable. Beyond a certain point, mere multiplication of the number of cases is of no importance. A serjeant's party of four riflemen suffice for an execution as well as a whole army would; and "at the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established;" nine "great" works prove all that twelve, or twelve hundred, could prove.

Of the three recorded cases (cp. Matt. x. 8) of Christ's *raising the dead*, it is barely conceivable that Jairus' daughter should have been in a deathly swoon; and the eye-witnesses were only the parents, with Peter, James, and John (Mark v. 22; Luke viii. 41). The son of the Nain widow (Luke vii. 11) was being carried to his grave, with the population of the little town as accompanying mourners. The raising of Lazarus at the Passover time, so near to Jerusalem with the great question about Jesus of Nazareth burning in all hearts, may be said to have taken place, as if by wager of battle (cp. John xii. 18), in view of the whole Jewish nation. On the unquestionable miraculousness of raising the dead (John xi., xii. 2, 17) we made observations (ii. 1st 3) in the preceding section of this chapter.

There are two cases of *walking on the sea* (Matt. xiv. 25, 29). The miracle is as clear as if it had been the creation of a world. There also are two cases of *feeding thousands* with few loaves and fishes (cp. Matt. xvi. 8-10). The hungry thousands, not in the cloisters of Tübingen, but in the keen clear open air of the wilderness, could distinguish bread from stones, if not fish from serpent. *Turning water into wine* (John ii. 1-11) is a clearly creative work. It would be well-remembered in a circle of respectable families for that whole generation. In the tension of feeling (John x. 24—lit. "*dost thou draw out—strain—our soul?*") occasioned by John's testimony in the fulness of the times, in a nation expectant as if waiting breathless for the tidings of a great battle for its life, the comparatively humble incident may have thrilled throughout all Palestine like an electric shock.

Regarding these "greater" works, it is to be observed generally, that they are introduced with a certain solemnity, in the description of themselves, or of their attendant circumstances or consequences. They are placed, either in a wide publicity, or so that a wide publication of them is inevitable (cp. Acts xxvi. 26). They occur at critical points in the ministry of the Worker; so that now, in time as well as place, they appear as landmarks over the whole theatre of the labours of His ministry; and from the first week of that ministry to its close, He can hardly have entered a village or a cottage where the "fame" of a great miracle had not gone before Him. It is not likely that the miracles of this class were numerous, like those of daily needed healing mercy. We can see upon reflection, that the few great works we have looked at *fill the Palestine of that age with light of unquestionable miracle*, wrought in attestation of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God.

There is a manifest accelerating augmentation of rapidity and grandeur of the works toward the close (cp. the movement in the history of Egyptian plagues). The raising of Lazarus is represented by Renan as a mock resurrection, the result of a fraudulent conspiracy of the Bethany family with Jesus and His disciples. If he had shown that to the Pharisees at the time (John xii. 19) they would gladly have given him thirty pieces of silver. His discovery would have enabled those Pharisees to ruin this great teacher at once, instead of seeking their purpose tortuously by the great crime of the Crucifixion. But when we turn from the guesses of atheism to the testimony of God-fearing eye-witnesses, we find that the whole nation, which must have been a party to any conspiracy—against *itself*—in the central action, must also have been the dupes of it (John xii. 9–19). This miracle must have made a profound impression far beyond "Jerusalem and the land of the Jews." From that Passover the whisper of it would spread over the world along with the tidings of the Crucifixion. Before the end of that year, in the remotest corners of the empire, there might be seen troubled faces in the Jewish synagogue, and Jews and Jewesses, suffering more than Pilate's wife in her dream, and knowing about the imprecation, "His blood be upon us and our children," might be kept awake through the long night

with agony of the awful question—"Have we killed the Prince of Life?"

The quieter case of the man born blind (John ix.) is peculiarly interesting in our inquiry as bringing vividly into view, with a certain homely pathos, the point of the argument from miracle to the divinity of the mission of the worker, which in this case means (vers. 35-38) the divinity of the Worker Himself, His being (John vii. 19, 25, viii. 12) the sovereign fountain of light. His enemies had by this time (John vii.) set watch upon Him, and sought to destroy Him (John viii. 40). The people were much exercised in mind about His claims (John vii. 4, 5, 11, 12, 15, 25-27, 31, 40-43). A man who had sat as a blind beggar in Jerusalem was a better case for identification of the person than Herod or Cæsar would have been. The investigation was the keen search of powerful jealousy "cruel as the grave." It resulted in making the fact as clear as noon-day. The work of giving sight to one born blind, is as truly miraculous as that of raising the dead. The man's own reasoning from the fact (John ix. 29-33) to the divine authority of the worker, is an exhaustive statement of the argument from miracle which never can be answered. And the Pharisees' attempt to stifle the evidence for the fact, which they repeated in the case of the resurrection of Christ, was an anticipation of the kind of answers to the argument which nowadays are given by infidels like Strauss and Renan; who thus far have fallen behind their predecessor Celsus, who did not deny the miracles, but explained them into magic.

2. *As to the minor works*—of healing and exorcism. Of these we have had occasion to take some cognisance (Bk. i. 2nd 2) as compared with works of healing and exorcism said to have been done in the second century. More recent circumstances have added to the interest which they possess for believing Christians. And a further consideration of them now may contribute further toward clearing the air around the whole subject of miracle as evidence of pointed supernaturalism.

(1.) In respect of *authentication*, these works of Jesus are strongly contrasted with those of the second century. The alleged ecclesiastical miracles were ascribed, vaguely, to the

Christian community, without specification of details that might enable us to judge as to their character. The Gospel miracles are connected with the public ministry of an individual Teacher, the greatest that our world has ever seen. The working of them on His part is distinctly marked (John x. 41) as contrasting Him with the great prophet John the Baptist. And in relation to identification of them, there is not only the general intimation (cp. Acts x. 38, ii. 22) of a general course of beneficent action, distinctively miraculous, intended as credential of His claim to be of God; there is, in amply sufficient number, distinct specification of particular cases, with place, time, persons, manner, and circumstances.

(2.) As to *the purpose to be served* by them, there also is a contrast. They, no doubt, were works of benevolence; and as such they appear to have been very numerous, almost filling the "day" of Christ, like the sun-rays which were arrows of the far-darting Apollo. All the Synoptists (Matt. viii. 16; Mark i. 12; Luke iv. 42) record the fact, that, while the great work of a day was preaching, the evening was given to those works of healing mercy; and there are indications of His having, in the short period of His vast labours, been occasionally overcrowded with the people's eagerness to obtain this kind of benefit, so as to be under the necessity of taking measures of limitation to prevent this kind of work from trenching on the leading purpose of His coming into the world. But the preaching was His great work. And the miracles, even when He was performing them, were subsidiary to the preaching, as evidence of His authority as a teacher from God.

There was no such purpose to be served by miracles in the second century. The truth of Christianity was already abundantly evidenced by the work of Christ, crowned in His resurrection, and the work of the Holy Ghost in the new creation of the Apostolic age, and the wonderful accomplishment of prophecy in that power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth. Additional miracles in the second century might only have detracted from the felt force of the Christian evidence of the first age by cancelling its uniqueness; or led men away, as afterwards happened, from Christianity to Churchi-

anity, by producing the impression of there being a new sun in the firmament; or degraded the Christian miracles into a commonplace like that of the wonders of heathenism.

(3.) Above all, these "minor" works were in a *régime of supernaturalism*, a "day" of wonder, like that of the sun and the moon standing still. They were part of His *greatest* work (on which we shall make observations presently),—the "work" of Christ, John xvii. 4,—His deliverance of the world from the tyranny of evil. And, if we look at them simply as credential, we see that their properly supernatural character is evinced, both by the unquestionably miraculous character of the "greater" works, in whose train they appear; and, also and especially, by *the bearing of Christ Himself in the doing of them*. Here, again, atheism will come in with suggestion of imposture, since only "to the pure all things are pure." The suggestion is a proof of *the aspect* worn by Christ in doing these works: if He had not borne the appearance of working miracle, atheism would have had no occasion to suggest imposture. But here, too, we listen to the clean-hearted witnesses who declare to us what they have seen and heard.

If Christ made a distinction in respect of any kind of greatness, as of magnitude or number, between His own miracles and those of other workers of wonders, He made no distinction in respect of evidential quality among His own works, as between "greater" and "minor." The very "point" of miraculous attestation, God's finger showing that His new kingdom is here, was (Luke xi. 20) alleged by Christ as exhibited in His work of exorcism. And the highest thing in direct personal action of God, the handling of the golden sceptre in forgiveness of sin, was claimed by Him as evidenced on His behalf by a work of healing the palsy (Matt. ix. 1–8). This case is interesting as the clearest case of a directly pointed appeal of Jesus to one particular work of His as evidencing His divinity. And on this and other accounts we will pause in contemplation of it.

Palsy is a *functional disease*. A medical expert may know, in this case as in the cases of leprosy, whether a cure is naturally possible. But neither we nor the witnesses are medical experts. And we do not need to be in order to judge

in the present case. A bird *could* fly into its cage from the floor. But we know that in fact it *has not* done so on this occasion; for we have seen it lifted into the cage by the owner's hand. We see Christ healing this paralytic so completely that he takes up his bed and walks:—not by any invasion of the office of the medical profession, in the case of some occult skill or wonderful natural gift of healing, but in the exercise of the sovereign prerogative of God Almighty (John v. 36; cp. ver. 17), the Giver of life now restoring it into fulness. Witness the blessing that goes before this daily bread—"Son, be of good cheer: thy sins be forgiven thee." His enemies perceive the meaning of that. "This man," the scribes in their heart say, "blasphemeth" ("who can forgive sins but God only?" Mark ii. 7). He knows their heart, and answers the reasoning of it; not by explaining His words as not meaning, that He can do what only God can do, but, by the miracle, proving His words, that He can do the thing they say.

Here, we can see, there is no meaning in a distinction between "greater" works and "minor." Some sins are greater than others. But the *power* (ἐξουσία) of right to forgive the smallest sin, is that same power which is exercised in forgiveness of the greatest—namely, the power, the sole power of God the only King. And in like manner the power which can work a minor miracle in this case can be only that power (ἐξουσία) of might which quickens the dead and creates the worlds. Accordingly, "the multitudes," when they "saw it, marvelled and glorified God, which had given such power unto men,"—where for "marvelled" a better reading is "feared,"—showing that they felt the *teras* (or "terrific thing") in the healing of their neighbour. In the *measure* of the exercise there may be degrees: the *nature* of the power is *infinity*, omnipotence. So the "minor" and the "greater" works, having a common nature, have a common effect as well as name. The second *Cana* work (John iv. 54) is a "sign" (in our version, "miracle") as well as the first. And if the disciples "believe" on seeing the water turned into wine, so do the nobleman and his household on seeing the healing of his child.

The supernaturalism of the "greater" works really forbids

the supposition that the "minor" works are merely natural. For the character which is known in the one class of works invites us to regard the other class as being of the same character; since they form part of the same system or body of "the works of Christ," "the works which His father hath given Him to do." There was a heathen story of a man who was partly of flesh and partly of marble. The Christian apostles representing to us one body of thirty works, in which ten great works are flesh, will not perpetrate the incongruity of having in the remaining two-thirds of it, the lower though the larger parts, only marble, tinted so as deceptively to resemble flesh. For that incongruity would violate a higher law than that of Horatian *Ars Poetica*. The "greater" works (cp. Matt. xvi. 8-10) are manifestly fitted and really intended to be taken as *samples* of the whole works, relatively to the teaching of Christ. But if, while the greater are manifestly supernatural and extraordinary, so as to be *evidential* wonders, what if the "minor," whose character does not show itself directly, be in reality but natural? Is not that as if the samples in the market at the mouth of a sack were corn, while the rest, out of sight, is only sand? The witnesses never dreamed of such a thing in a working, which to their view was all "upright, downright, and straightforward."

We will now pause to reconsider the two general cases of healing and of exorcism.

(1.) As to the *healing* works, did they result from a natural gift of healing, existing in Christ supremely as a perfection of His manhood? Then, first, in so far as that perfection was in consequence of His miraculous conception, the healing works will fall to be regarded as (change for a sovereign) so many miracles of detail, particular "manifestations" of the miracle of His manhood as the last Adam: which would seem to make an excessively jejune construction of John ii. 11 in connection with John i. 14 and i. 1. But, second, we do not know that perfection of manhood implies a high degree of natural gift of healing. Perfection implies symmetry. An abnormally high degree of such a physical quality may be—like the pearl, a secretion of disease—symptomatic of something other than physical perfection. And there are cases in which apparently the physical gift is possessed in high degree, and trafficked in where there does not appear to be close approximation to moral perfection of the manhood. But, finally, we are relieved from

the necessity of groping among such obscurities by the bearing of Christ in His performance of these wonders. To begin with, the miracle-working power in Him is completely *at His will* (cp. 1 Cor. xiv. 32). The "manifestations" are, *in their nature*, not physical emanations, like sparks flying out of an electric vase full charged, but "works," deliberate operations at the dictate of His judgment and His choice. (Where we perceive the stupidity as well as irreverence of certain theorisings.) And also and especially, as to *their purpose*, it manifestly *is His will*, it is His avowed intention (Matt. ix. 6), that we should regard His healing "works," not as mere occasional outbreaks of benevolence, but as proofs of His being invested with power to forgive sin. A natural gift possessed in secret, and put forth in such a manner for such a purpose, would it not be like the ventriloquism employed in connection with heathen oracles, to delude "the multitudes" into imagining that they hear the supernatural voices of the gods? It is not so that they were dealt with (John x. 1, 2) by the "compassionate" Son of man (Matt. ix. 36).

(2.) As to *casting out devils*: in connection with this class of miracles there comes into consideration the further view that the ministry of Christ was in effect *the great decisive battle* of the world's liberation from the tyranny of evil. One of the witnesses intimates elsewhere (1 John iii. 8) as the purpose of the coming of the Son of God, "that He might destroy the works of the devil." That is the view which the *Hebrew* Christians were expected (Heb. ii. 14, 15) to take of the purpose of His assumption of the seed of Abraham—namely, that in order to men's deliverance from the enslaving fear of death, He "through death might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." And Christ Himself (Matt. xii. 25–29), with express reference to His work of casting out evil spirits, represents His action as being for the subversion of *the kingdom* of Satan (cp. Matt. iv. 8, 9), and as resulting (Matt. xii. 29) in a *definitive* subjugation and restriction of His dominion of evil (cp. John xvi. 11, xiv. 30, xvi. 33). It is doubtful whether, since Christ died on Calvary, there has been in the world any "Great Power" of heathen religion, such as there had been in the systems which then began to wither away. Even upon the view that in the second century there was a real power of evil demons calling for exorcism, that, we saw, might be only a broken power, calling for no miracle. But it would call for the suggestion, that there had been in the first century a great overthrow of the concentrated power of that evil by Christ.

It has been suggested (Farmer, Essay on *The Demoniacs of*

the New Testament) that the demonology of the Gospel history may be understood in consistency with the supposition that the demons are not persons, but only (personified) powers or principles of evil, dealt with as when Christ "rebuked" the fever and the storm; and operative upon the mind and body of men as evil passions and habits operate (cp. Paul's *alter ego* in Rom. vii.). But even that supposition would leave room for the fact, (1) that there is in the world a great spiritual dominion of evil, which has its throne, or citadel, in the soul of man; and (2) that for the world's deliverance from that dominion, *the great decisive battle* was fought in the earthly ministry of Christ, and "finished" on His cross. This would make His work of exorcism to be in supernaturalism unique, so as not to call for the suggestion of a repetition of the working afterwards, but to exclude the thought of real repetition of it.

According to the Bible history of the world's redemption, the great decisive battle of it was fought in Palestine, in the few years of the earthly ministry of Christ; and of that conflict there are two main aspects, which combine in throwing light upon His detailed works of exorcism. 1. In a measure and manner which, so far as man has learned, have no parallel in the history of the universe, there was a desperate struggle of the concentrated powers of evil against God's cause of truth and goodness among men. And 2. To an effect that is similarly unique in the history of the universe, the battle of that cause was fought and won, so that the power of evil was definitively broken in His death by the incarnate Son of God as the Son of man "treading the wine-press alone" (cp. Gen. iii. 15). What thus remained to be accomplished through the work of the Spirit in the new dispensation (John xvi. 14), was, by application of the redemption "finished" on the Cross, distribution of the spoils of the victory there consummated over God's enemy and man's. And this historical view of redemption as a whole greatly strengthens the view, in particular, that the Gospel works of exorcism were in reality supernatural and extraordinary. For they, too, have to be contemplated in connection with those "greater" works, unquestionably miraculous, which give character to that whole ministry as a *régime* of supernaturalism, in which—so to speak—miracle is the order of the day. And also and especially, the specific nature of the work in this case

(cp. Matt. ix. 29), casting out devils, required the exercise of a supernatural power that is not operative to this effect in the ordinary history of our world (this point we shall consider further immediately). The exorcisms were thus not isolated actions of deliverance merely, but so many strokes in that great Palestinian battle; as the Egyptian Plagues had been in the Egyptian Battle of the Strokes ("plagues").

The evidential force of the "signs" is greatly augmented in effect when they thus are seen to be, not (as "the sign of Jonas?") *merely* external, like a finger-post, but (Ps. xxxii. 8), in the soul of the movement, like a hero's guiding eye in battle: as being themselves the movement under one of its aspects; like the spring, which is a "sign" of the approaching summer, because it is the summer approaching.

In the wider view that now opens upon us, there appear on the horizon, Incarnation, Resurrection, supernatural Redemption, as giant Alpine mountains on which the eye reposes. The heart meanwhile is gladdened with the thought, that within their guardian limit there are inclosed the "little hills" whereon the Redeemer's flocks are pastured, beside life-streams that have come down from "the river of God." The streams are in their origin supernatural, and in all their course are constituted by "manifestation" of the eternal glory of that Word which was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. And the intended effect of these manifestations in the record of them is (John xx. 30; cp. 1 John i. 3), "that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; and that believing we may have life in His name."

If all miracles be as the "little hills" on the foreground, the "greater" works conform to the type of those transcendent facts of incarnation and resurrection and redemption thus far, that they rise in unmistakable distinctness above the plane of the ordinary even in supernaturalism, so as to be, not simply gracious, but miraculous beyond all possibility of doubt. Now that gives the character of supernaturalism to the "minor" works, whose quality might have been doubtful if they had been alone; as the gentlest slope in a region belongs to that system which is embosomed in the

giant mountains, in which it nestles, it may be, with a quiet "beauty slumbering in the lap of terror." And, while even the bodily healings are so far a foretaste of emancipation from the tyranny of evil, the casting out of demons is in the actual achievement of the redemption so applied, like the destruction of Pharaoh and his Egyptians in the Red Sea.

Upon the supposition that man's world, through the prevalence of moral evil in him, was under a tyranny of demons, amounting to a personal possession by them, an additional realism of meaning is given to such an action of Christ as rebuking the wind (cp. Rev. vii. 1-3 and Eph. ii. 2). On the other hand, the view that the demons were only personified principles or influences, seems to impoverish those words of His "which are Spirit, which are life," and otherwise to necessitate a great straining in the construction of the Bible in its obvious historical import. On the background of its history, there appears a spiritual warfare, affecting the universe widely, which comes to a decision upon earth in man. And there is really nothing known to us, in the nature of things, that forbids the supposition of a personal connection of the history of our world with that warfare of spiritual principalities and powers in the invisible universe.

Impostures or hallucinations in connection with demonology do not prove the non-existence of misleading fiends: counterfeit money would not be where genuine coin is not. It is consistent with the "subtlety" of an "old serpent," that to the innocence of Eden he should have disguised himself in the simplicity of a beast of the field. In the world's old age of non-belief, it might now be a grand stroke of his "cunning craftiness" to efface his very existence from men's mind, so as to leave them at ease in the belief of there being "no supernatural." A companion stroke would be, by means of that secularistic philosophy (cp. Col. ii. 8), to lead them into the additional *credo* that "miracles are impossible,"—since the attempt to father the true miracles upon *him* has proved a failure. The necromancy of our present-day "spiritualism" is no clear proof of quackery in the witch of Endor. And though she had been an exposed impostor, that would be no disproof of a life beyond the grave. Such thoughts may lead us to perceive the unwisdom of being

determined in our views of those matters by the Epicurean prepossession of "no spirit, nor angel, neither resurrection." And it needs only a little reflection to show us, that in fact we do not know, and cannot know, that in the nature of things it is impossible for a human mind and body to be in the alien possession of a demon; as we know that they can be under dominion of a sinful lust,—enslaving the sinner's will, depraving his affections, blinding his reason,—so that his very individuality shall be as if submerged and lost in domination of a possessing fiend.

But in our inquiry as to extraordinary supernaturalism in the work of Christ casting out devils, it is not necessary, in order to a conclusion, to be established in belief of the personality of those evil spirits. It suffices that we know the fact of a tyranny of evil which, whether personal or impersonal, is effectively for man a bondage of death; and the fact that Christ in His earthly ministry accomplished a real deliverance from that tyranny, having taken upon Him, "not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

Further, though all demonology were effaced from the record of revelation and from the history of mankind, there still are the wonders of healing the body; beyond the "minor" works there are the "greater;" beyond these, there is the grand miracle of the resurrection of Christ; and beyond that, the great event of incarnation of God;—while all the time redemption is being applied on earth, to the effect of a new creation of man's life by the gospel, a movement further appearing in and through the "Christian civilisation" of the world.

(4.) *Third, the miracle is shown to be true, by the test of the kingdoms of Satan and of God.*

The inability to believe in a true beginning is unaccountable on the part of the inventor of a Forger, with a marked originality, who began the Christian literature of a century before his time. But, two millenniums before Hegel, Zeno had

a deeper grief, in that problem about the possibility of motion, which we heartlessly left unsolved in the Logic Class. And though he did not know it, his problem vainly calls for a solution at the heart of all pantheistic and other naturalistic philosophy, as the murdered Helen of Kirkconnell called to her lover in his sleep. All naturalistic philosophy has in it a fatal incapacity of motion, to the effect of any real Beginning, or any real Proceeding. From this incapacity Peter was delivered by creation (2 Pet. iii. 5), through free action of *will*; and John, through a personal Word, who is in the bosom of the Father. But naturalism, all the way down from Zeno and others, through Spinoza and others to Hegel and others, has there stuck fast, as if in a series of pillars of salt, without a Beginning, or Alpha, of motion in the universe—and so without one step toward an Omega, or end: all the intervening history it can find being, not any progression of real things in the world, but only an ideal progression of logic—spinning in the mind. Hence (*teste* the late Dr. Carstairs Douglas in hearing of the present writer) the Chinese name of that philosophy, *Tavism*: *tav* meaning “method;” so that that ancient people have anticipated our Hegelianism even in its great word of power (“methodology”) by countless hundreds of years.

Sympathising with Zeno,—*non ignara malorum*, etc.,—we nevertheless will not, under the name of investigating Gospel history, go back two thousand years upon the Quixotic enterprise of delivering an atheistic philosopher from wool-gathering bewilderments about the possibility of motion;—no, though that ‘old philosophy’ should masquerade as “new divinity.” Even Epicurus at least *finds* things in motion. And they are grandly set to music to him by the one great Roman poet. The account, however, which Lucretius gives of *origination* is lame; for the “‘spec’s I grewed,” which is the substance of it, would not account for the origin of one syllable of his own *Rerum Natura*, to say nothing of the universal orderly system it describes. And the things which are sonorously set forth as originated are found on close inspection to be only Comp-tian *faces* of things,—with some body of incoherent stuffing, like the rags and sawdust which are the true body of a child’s beautiful doll. Still, there is some sort of mechanical motion:

though—"What a creature is man!"—it be only as that of a marionette, with no *primum mobile* of rational soul.

We in our inquiry have now gone far beyond mere physicalism. We are at the stage of inquiring upon the supposition that the Living God may choose to come, in the nature of sinful man, to seek and save the lost. Thus far we conform to the prescription—

*Nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus
Intererit* (Bring not God in without need).

And our present question is, whether the Gospel miracles are *such as might have been performed* by that incarnate God, if He should choose to give "signs," in the form of "works," for attestation of the divinity of His mission. Of course we know that those miracles are not—as no other real thing is—in accordance with the supposition of an impossibility of motion; nor with the supposition of a haphazardous beginning of a wondrous progression, that is most wondrous because it is orderly in boundless multitudinousness, yet purposeless and blind! We assume, with Moses, that there is rational free agency of *will* on the part both of God and of man; and with the prophets, "crying in the wilderness," that there is ruin of man through sin, but hope for him in the mercy of God; and with the evangelists, that there is incarnation on the way to crucifixion, with a view to "the hope of the resurrection" unto life eternal. And we now are inquiring as to the "signs" for the "manifestation" of that "Life" (1 John i. 2), of which Abraham and Moses had obtained anticipative glimpses, in appearances of "the great I AM;" where the doleful Egyptians could perceive only a veiled "thing, that was, is, and shall be," which when unveiled proved to be only "*being*, equal to *nothing*."

It is evident that such a manner of looking at the matter may very materially affect the view that falls to be taken of it. Hume, for instance, if he had perused the New Testament Scriptures with care—it is said that he owned he had not—might have come so to regard the matter as not to publish, "for the amusement of the learned world," as he said beside his mother's corpse, such things as his *Essay on Miracles*, which by implication makes a liar of Jesus Christ, in whom

he half professed to believe for salvation. For Christ Himself would have shown him that His miracles were not mere freaks of power, like a child's firing off the artillery of an empire; and, much more, were not the devices of a conjuror like Simon Magus, such as Hume may have learned to think about from his intercourse with cynical scepticism of French ecclesiastics. According to the Worker's representation, the "works" are for a purpose that is divined (John xvii. 4); and are done with a view to accomplishment (τελείωσις) of that purpose of the Father. They are done in the spirit of that Father's mind, to which Christ has been devoted from the beginning (Luke ii. 49), and the accomplishment (τελείωσις) of which is to Him as His life's bread (John iv. 24). It is on that account, if we will believe what the same Scriptures elsewhere declare as to the matter (Heb. ii. 10), the accomplishment (τελείωσις) of Christ Himself; and in truth (Heb. x. 10) the accomplishment (τελείωσις) of Christians too. It stands to reason, if we really will reason about the matter, that—beginning or no beginning—a work of such a description has to be judged with a reference to its end (τέλος); especially where that end is not only—*finis operantis*—the purpose in view of the worker, but also—*finis operis*—the purpose which the work is intended to serve in connection with that whole system in which it appears as a part.

But now, supposing not only the possibility of miracles, but the fact of the Gospel miracles, there still is an ideal possibility that they should not be true, so that the teacher or the doctrine they attest is from God; but, that they should be false and misleading, like the lights exhibited by wreckers to lure ships to their destruction. Hence the importance of our having some *criterion* or test of an alleged miracle; so that we may have it in our power to distinguish true miracle from false. It is not enough to know abstractly that a miracle is real, extraordinary, and supernatural. The wrecker's light of death is as real as the Pharos light of salvation. And they both alike are supernatural in the sense now in our question,—that is, they are not placed there by nature, like the sun, moon, and stars, but are placed there by designing free agency, purposing intelligence, with the intention, for the end of guiding mankind in the dark upon the troubled sea of

danger. Only, while the guidance of the one light is to safety, that of the other is to destruction. Hence the vital need of a criterion or test.

It is conceivable that there should not have been any distinctly definable test or mark; as, for instance, in the case of a man's handwriting, if it have to be distinguished from a forgery. We may know that hand, so as to be able to distinguish it from all others, and swear to it in a matter of life or death; and yet be unable to say, to ourselves or others, what particular thing it is in that hand which we perceive in it as different from all other hands. But an expert calligraphist, examined about a writing, is sometimes able to specify the marks or characters which have led him to perceive that this writing is or is not a forgery. In relation to miracles, the generality of Christians are in the position of one who knows his father's handwriting—without being able to tell what the thing is in these works which enable them to feel sure that they are not the works of a false god, luring into evil by simulation of the miracles of the true God?

A short way of answering would be to say, "There are not and cannot be any real miracles that are not true," so that the reality of this miracle is a conclusive proof of its truth. That answer only says, that there is no need of any criterion or test of a miracle. As to the question of fact, whether there cannot conceivably be a false miracle which is real, a light which is *not* "the true light," we need only recognise the *ideal* possibility of such a thing in order to see the need of a test or criterion. And at least the ideal possibility which was not denied by Elijah in relation to Baal, has been distinctly recognised by Christ in relation to false prophets and false Christs (Matt. xxiv. 24), and by Paul (2 Thess. ii. 10) in relation to the Man of Sin, and by John the Divine (Rev. xiii. 14, 15) in relation to the second Beast (see above, on *Ecclesiastical* Miracles, Bk. ii. 2nd 2, Excursion). They all proceed upon the view that there can be "lying wonders," wreckers' lights which are false but real, with a "deceivableness of unrighteousness" which deceives the peoples of the world, and which if that were possible would deceive the very elect.

A criterion or testing mark has been pointed out by Christ

Himself (Matt. xii. 21–23). The Pharisees, unable to deny the reality of His miracles of casting out devils, denied the truth of them as witnesses to His being of God, on the ground that He cast out devils by Beelzebub their prince (ἄρχων). Christ in answer did not say, it is inconceivable that there should be any miracle but a true miracle of God. What He said was, in the first instance, negatively, this miracle cannot have been wrought by Satan, for it destroys his kingdom. And then, when He reached the conclusion of His reasoning, it appeared that He had in view also the positive test of fitness to establish the kingdom of God.

That test is no doubt applied by men continually, without their distinctly saying to themselves, "This miracle is true, for it establishes God's kingdom and destroys the kingdom of Satan; that broadside was fired by a friend, for it destroyed the enemy's fleet and saved the nation. Instead of reasoning so distinctly, we rather *feel*. These works are *in keeping* with the character of goodness and truth: the scope, the tendency, the effect of them is to make an end of evil and falsehood; they are in *the style* of a divinely pure and true religion. In this way we are back at what we saw as to the condition of mind for judging in the general case of this religion. One requires to have in him some discernment of the moral or spiritual character of religion, as when a man says of a thing, it is heroic, it is Godlike: "it became Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things." What Christ purposes that we should apply as criterion or testing mark of miracle in particular, is that character of destructiveness to Satan's kingdom; a negative, of which the positive position is constructiveness of God's kingdom; a manifest fitness, tendency, effectiveness, to cast down the one and build up the other; as the spring sun, which chases away the winter and brings the summer in.

It may be difficult to apply this test. It often is difficult, and sometimes is dangerous to apply a test. But it may be ruinous not to apply one. Thus John says, that the lying wonders shall mislead the peoples into idolatry of the Beast; and Paul, that their deceivableness of unrighteousness is in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth; and Christ, that they would deceive, if that were

possible, the very elect. There is no escaping that. If a man receive not the love of the truth, there may be sent upon him a strong delusion that he should believe a lie (2 Thess. ii. 11, 12). He may not be an atheist, not believing in any "sign," but simply drifting about in darkness on the sea until he somehow sink: relying upon what the London *Times* described as "the chapter of accidents, the Bible of the fool." But though he should be exercised about religion, and looking for a "sign," yet he may be fatally misled by the very sign he looks for, as the storm-driven ship is destroyed by the false light of the wrecker. There has to be in him that capacity of discerning signs, that faculty of judging between miracles true and false, which Paul describes as "receiving the love of the truth," and which Christ, relatively to knowledge of religious doctrine, describes (John vii. 17) as a willingness or wishfulness to do the will of God. Let us call it *moral earnestness*, true-heartedness, real desire to know the truth in order to do the right. If there be not something of that sort in the man, he cannot successfully apply the criterion for judgment of even the miracle; even the miracle thus tries and judges the man; and may leave him branded with its "know that the kingdom of God has come nigh unto you," which has a *τέρας* of implication, "Meet me at Philippi!"

The method of testing a miracle, by its fitness in relation to a kingdom, resembles the method of Kant for testing a proposed precept of morality, or course of action, in his universal categorical imperative, "Act from a maxim fit to become law in a system of universal legislation." This takes the *idea* of a "universal legislation," and bids us consider, with reference to any proposed law or course, how would it "fit" into a system, or operate if generalised into a system, for the government of all things (in moral life): which a non-professional person once did into the plain English, "How would it *work all round*?" For the judging of miracle, Christ took the concrete *idea* of the kingdom of God as defined in the Old Testament, and as defining the opposition kingdom of Satan. We have so far resolved to proceed in that way, *assuming* the fact of revelation, incarnation, redemption, and upon that assumption considering, are these

the kind of works that might have been done by the Redeemer? But the idea of the kingdom of God, as applied by Christ in this relation, is best fitted for our guidance at the present stage. It means the Bible idea of a *reign of righteousness and truth*. Satan, the "adversary," who is a liar in order to be a murderer, and murders with his lies in order to successful usurpation, means, a *dominion of wickedness and falsehood*, and the question regarding the miracle is, Negatively, is it destructive of the dominion of wickedness and falsehood? and positively, is it constructive of a reign of righteousness and truth?

This assumes the fact of morality, the right of a kingdom of God. Those who take a real interest in the detailed question as to miracles are as a class quite prepared to proceed upon that assumption, that morality is the heart of the rational universe as the object of our study, and that in a truly moral government God is king. They also will generally have no difficulty in provisionally accepting the Old Testament ideal of a kingdom of God, with its root-principle of love—love God and thy neighbour—as fairly adequate for the working purpose of a moral test of miracle. And similarly, men of the mind of Stuart Mill, in respect of appreciation of the morality of the Christ, will upon reflection perceive, that the test which is constituted by that Old Testament ideal may now by us be regarded as constituted by the realisation of that ideal in Christ Himself. Miracle would thus be approved as true on being found working conformably to the spirit of Bible religion, or, to the character of Christ. But others may prefer the more abstract way of speaking—about a reign of truth and righteousness. We now see our way toward application of the *eriterion*, so as to reach a conclusion.

1. For instance, as to *effect upon personal moral character*. The case immediately in view was that of expulsion of an unclean spirit: restoration of an individual to freedom of purity and light. In *one* case, it is perhaps conceivable that an enemy of God and man should allow the rescue, or even actively accomplish it, as an angel's lure, for misleading mankind as a whole through the fair and false appearance of deliverance in truth and goodness. But let us consider what

has been the accompaniment, the seeming consequence of the supernaturalism of Christ among mankind on the whole? The answer is generally Christian civilisation, under the Old Testament as well as the New. That has always been vitally connected with the supernaturalism of Bible religion. The temple of Jehovah without the Bible miracles would be a mere Hall of science and art, or philosophical Porch or grove, or deistical Chapel. And the supernaturalism tried by the fruits of moral character in those under its influence, has manifestly on the whole been a wholesome thing. Apparently the river of the water of its life, as from the throne of God and of the Lamb, has been pure and clear. There has been abundant impurity among the devotees: witness the awful denunciations of the prophets, and the expostulations and forecasting admonitions of the apostles. But every one sees that this is not in consequence of the supernaturalism, but in despite of it and springing from antagonism to it, if not antipathy disguised. *The miracle is clean, no one ever seriously thought of impurity as proceeding from Jehovah's temple.*

On the other hand, *no one*, who understands the subject, *ever thought of purity as proceeding from a heathen temple.* The heathen supernaturalism is somehow an impure thing. The Apostolic "but now ye are clean!" is a heart's cry of relief on behalf of converts from heathenism, delivered from the *religions* as impure things. It is not otherwise when, as in our present day in "spiritualism," the supernaturalism is without religion, having only a vague *tépas*, and no God. Supposing the reality of the wonders in this case, no one imagines that in this case they prove their truth by purifying the devotees in mind and heart. At the best, if they leave the soul in a condition of intellectual sanity, morally they leave it vacant as a "house to let"—"empty, swept, and garnished." As for the simply non-moral systems of mere naturalism, it is needless to inquire about their more external consequences: the immediate effect of them is effacement of the conception of morality from the mind; and real darkness in the mind must needs be death in heart and soul. "They that make them are like unto them" (Ps. cxv. 8).

2. As to *the scope or intention of the miracle.* "I will guide thee with mine eye," is characteristic of the Bible miracle. Not

only does it show the presence of God in history. It always has in it by implication, guidance (even where there is not open direction), leading the soul, the individual, the community, toward that realisation of the ideal of God's kingdom, which is another name for "fulfilling all righteousness." We saw (Bk. i. chap. ii. that the religion brings its transcendentalism into the toil of common duties. The supernaturalism ever tends to save the common from sinking into a common-place which is *eo ipso* "unclean" (Acts x.). *There never was a miracle of this religion that did not look and work toward "a restitution of all things,"* in the sense of restoration of that moral order which is highest in the universe.

The sun and moon standing still are a trying bizarrerie to an astronomer. This is not at all the sort of "work" that *he* would have done. Instead of stopping the clock, he would have exhibited experiments to show men how it goes. He forgets that Jehovah was "manifesting" Himself to crude Israelites and heathen Canaanites as "the Lord God Omnipotent, *reigning*." And who will deny that in order to serving that purpose once for all, it was well for once to stop the clock; although those ancient men had not yet sunk so low as our philosophers, who imagine that the clock has a self-originated power of perpetual motion in its mechanism, while Zeno cannot so much as see a possibility of motion. A Biblical critic, too, who—so far like Daniel—"understands from books" (not Daniel's), knows that *he* would not (he could not) have given the name of Cyrus before that king was born; and is mortally offended, so as to saw Isaiah asunder, because that prophet is not so strict in prophesying only what is past. But whether he be or be not satisfied as to the authenticity of these miracles of wisdom or power, no one has any difficulty in perceiving that they are dominated by *a moral purpose*, true and high. The intention of them is manifestly not a mere bewilderment of wonder or of terror. They are plainly purposed as well as fitted to create or to deepen a salutary sense of providence, particular and special, "most holy, wise, and powerful," of the living God in history. *That idea of God the Holy One, as not only reigning over all but governing in and through all, fills the whole Biblical thaumaturgy.* And—

The idea of God as the Holy One is completely wanting in the wonder annals, the thaumaturgy of the heathen world.

Heathenism is the worldly world left to itself, and (Acts xvii. 27) trying to be religious. It often has much of overstrained supernaturalism about it. And at first sight it is a strange incredible thing to say, that while no one ever thought of "pollutions" in association with the temple of Jehovah, no one ever thought of a *sanctifying* influence, like that of the prophets and apostles, as proceeding from the oracles and shrines of the religions of the world. But the reality as well as reason of that may be perceived when we look into the supernaturalism of those religions. What may be called the "minor" works of heathen supernaturalism, its everyday thaumaturgy of prophecies and works of power, represented to us by the vile huxtering *goetae*, and by the lingering infamy of black arts in the world's dark places, it is happily not necessary to depict in detail, for in fact it would hardly be possible to set forth what is known about the "pollutions" that have poisoned the sacred fountain of the life of the peoples. We will take for our contemplation what may be described as the "greater" miracles of heathenism, those *prodigies* or *monstra* which have made a wide and deep impression on the heart of populations, so as to be recorded in their annals. And we see that the absence of a purifying effect of the religions upon the peoples is accounted for as soon as we recall to mind the character of those wonders, even as recorded by the heathens themselves; that is to say, in other words, according to *the view* that was taken of those extraordinary events by the populations of mankind. Though the event should be unreal, the *view* that is taken of it shows the heart of the peoples. It was completely a *non-moral* view. The heathen view of a miracle was an ascription of the wonder to some supernatural power, wholly without reference of it to a *moral order* of the world. In other words, the heathen view of *deity* was that of power without morality or holiness, "a thing," said Solon, one of their wise men, "altogether awful and terrific" (Hdt. i. 32). The heathen view of the world's history was *thus*, that it is a course of things without righteousness in government. We know that a few individuals had some conception of what is

meant by a moral government of the world. We now are looking at the practical religion of mankind, as appearing in its view of the supernatural in prodigies or *monstra*.

We here have reached the point at which philosophy broke away from the religions and became atheistic; that is, the point at which men began seriously to *reason* about religion. Then they saw that it was impossible for the religions to be true, and that their gods, too, must be false. The fundamental conception which led on to this result was that of *order*: "Order is Heaven's first law." This we are taught, not by mere tradition of the schools of philosophy, but by the very nature of the human soul as *rational*. A world that is to be intelligible to the soul has to be *orderly*. Hence one of the names for "world" is *kosmos*, "order;" and that has in it a conception of seemliness, which finds expression in *mundus* ("the beautiful"), another name for that orderly world. But as soon as men began to *reason*, so as to see this in the nature of things, as corresponding to the nature of the soul, then the religions and the gods were no longer believed in by them. For *disorder* was in the very heart and soul of that view of the gods, or of the world, which really formed the religions.

The record of prodigies or *monstra*, in the annals of the peoples, is wholly different from the Bible account of miracles, great or small. It shows that *the mind* represented by the Bible religion, is a specifically different thing from the mind of that world which took this view of the wonders. The *moral purpose*, which in the Bible view is everything, in the heathen view is really nothing. In this view the wonder is only terrific, startling, like the occurrence of an earthquake or an eclipse. Or, if a deity be introduced, it has only the effect of adding to the feeling of disorder. Reason is outraged by a Jove, who with no moral to point, becomes articulate in thunders and lightnings of wrath, which is all but brute unreason. Reason at once dethrones Apollo, when his pestilential arrows upon the Achean host are seen to be in private revenge on account of injury and insult suffered by a favourite priest. The gods thus are seen to be worldly; and, in fact, in high degree "ungodly." In heaven they have strifes of faction among themselves. There is no such thing as *holiness* within the heart of one of them. Their

heaven is really but an upper compartment of our worldly world. Their appearances on earth are interferences with its *orderliness*: *disorderly* raids of partisanship, as if on a theatre for "manifestation" of the discreditable squabbings and caballings of their invisible world.

Now the real world is *cosmic*, or "orderly." And such action of the gods, in relation to such a world, was seen to be unreasonable against nature; not simply supernatural, but unnatural or monstrous. It was a disturbance, as if a giant had thrust his hand into the machinery of a watch. And the tendency of that, in its influence upon the *feelings* which are the springs of human life, was not to regulate and purify, guiding and sustaining men's lives to its true great ends; but to distract, to make uncertain, to cause misfortune, to lead fatally astray. For it was an incalculable element, whose operation was not comprehended; like the secret influence within a ship, which, causing unaccountable variations of the compass needle, misleads the perplexed mariner to his death.

The look of *distraction* to be observed on the face of heathenism, when it comes into view in the rising gospel sunlight, is the reflex of a weird fatefulness, which enters into the heathen view of the world as under power of supernaturalism: a look such as may have appeared on the Gadarene demoniac, restless in the "dry places" of squalor among the tombs. And the feeling of that weird fatefulness only deepened with the deepening thought of those who, retaining a sense of religion in their souls, endeavoured to apprehend some sort of order in the world as under a power that is divine. Such were the great poets Æschylus and Sophocles, men of highest gifts of mind, and at the same time among the last of those poets who were "prophets" (Tit. i. 12) of heathenism. They strove, in their views of the world and man, to reason the disorder away. But they completely failed. Their ideal representation had no healing in it, no rest unto the soul—such as in the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Their deepest thought, in the sort of psalmody to be found in their choruses, could only hint at some one great resistless movement, which perhaps has some connection with the Furies that drive lost mortals to destruction or despair; and with a silent Nemesis, persistent as a shadow at the heels

of crime. This was a sort of essay at a rudimentary order. But as to the essential nature of it, that depended on the Power which was in the great resistless movement. And this Power, the more it was considered, the more it came to be regarded as a blind impersonal Fate. A heart of stone, upon the throne of universal dominion! That will come to be imaged by stone hearts upon terrestrial thrones, whether of stoical heathen emperors at Rome, or of Mohammedan sultans in Constantinople: and leave mankind in a dark despair of life. But the disorder in reality remains. Not on the face of the world only, but in the very heart of it, there is the supreme disorder, which is constituted by the non-existence in it of a veritable moral government or kingdom of God.

That view of a sort of order, dimly apprehended in the mind of a few of the best men at their best, had in it no resource of moral energy, sufficing to sustain a serious thought of restoration of true order among men. The very *idea* of an order true and high to be realised for mankind, had perished from the working thought of the nations. There could not be for them a Paradise Regained,—as we may see in some of their own essays,—though an Orpheus were at their dictation to transform and transfigure the whole face of physical nature, and a new Jerusalem, correspondingly to their highest conceptions of happiness for man, were to arise like Ilion to the music of Apollo's lute.

For, indeed, "the kingdom of heaven is within" men, and they did not know wherein it consists. The physical world is in no danger of disturbance affecting the stable equilibrium of its order from such miracles as those of Moses and of Christ. On the contrary, wherever that order is most carefully studied, most fully appreciated, and so attended to that the world's face wears any look of a restored Eden, there, all but invariably, it is to be found that this new civilisation has come from the miracles of redemption in Egypt and in Canaan: "the rock was Christ." But the grand disorder is, not on the face of things, but in the heart of man. And man's heart will never have true light of purity and peace excepting in righteous reconciliation with God, rest on a bosom which is holy, healing in a love which is pure. And

with reference to that highest order, the moral order of truth and goodness, the miracles are tested by their fitness to serve the purpose of manifesting the glory of Christ, so that men shall believe in Him; and shall have life in believing in that Word which was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth, when the faithful witnesses beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father. So it appears upon the supposition on which we must proceed if we will consider this matter reasonably—according to its nature. And we have to consider it so. For the Christian miracles cannot be rightly judged, they are not even really seen, except in their vital organic connection with the Christian system as a whole, according to its own fundamental representation—"No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John i. 18).

The heathen impression of wonder may be represented by the historian's gloomy generalisation, that the gods visit our world only to punish it; to which a companion view is the philosopher's, that the world has been given over to demons to be tormented; and the two are combined in what, as we saw, another historian puts dramatically into the mouth of a philosopher, "*deity (τὸ θεῖον)* is a thing altogether awful and terrific." The Gospel miracles, on the other hand, produce upon the mind an impression of attractive goodness (Acts x. 38), and even beauty of *holiness*, as if to the physical wonders, too, there had extended the redemptive influence, and to them it might be said, "but ye are clean." The reason of that impression is, that their influence or scope is always perceived as being toward what is highest and best. As the traveller in Palestine is always within view of "holy Lebanon," so in looking at the miracles we never forget the kingdom of God. We remember that the kingdom itself is among us—and the king—while the cedars of Lebanon are being brought, and stones are silently shaping in Jerusalem quarries out of sight, for the temple of a greater than Solomon, in which mankind are to worship God through Immanuel the Redeemer. We feel that there is no invasion upon the sanctity of nature, but that there is a sanctification of nature through its being prepared for Jehovah's dwelling among men.

All that seems disturbance is only the evanescent work of preparation for His abiding temple. And from that temple there shall issue a great influence, like the river of prophetic vision (Ezek. xlvii. 1–12), of civilisation in the restored natural order on the face of the world, through replacement of moral and spiritual order in the heart of it; for this Redeemer is the Creator (John vi. 17).

Thus, too, we find that “order is Heaven’s first law.” This we see even in the physical consequences of the miracles: the supernatural is seen replacing a lost order of nature. The demoniac, who was furious, restless, breaking chains, rending away garments, in the squalor of “dry places,” is now composedly sitting clothed, and in his right mind. Even the bodily healing is nature’s true order restored. Disease is not nature’s order, but a thing extraneous to life, unnatural as if monstrous. The normal condition is health, that life in its fulness; so that our word for “health” is transformed into “holiness,” moral soundness of purity and love. And that by the miracle is graciously restored. The mother of the Jerusalem blind man sees now, for the first time, *her son*: the rewards of nature to her parentage (*θρεπτήρια*) in his capable stalwart manhood, what she dreamed of when she looked on his face forty years ago, before she was heart-stricken by perceiving that her boy could never look into her eyes. The noble centurion, returning from soldierly theologising about the *archegos* of the universe, finds waiting him in his quarters, not the helpless decrepitude which made his heart bleed at the sight of it, but the well-remembered manly athlete, who had saved his life in battle, and thenceforward was no longer a servant merely to him, but a brother and a friend. And good Martha, with everything around her now in highest order, has her home filled with the melody of joy and health, intermingled at times with half-sobbing recollection of the dark days, when she could hardly hide from others that she was dying of pure grief, through secretly watching tender Mary pining after Lazarus. Here is true festive order, which was lost and is found again, conforming to the highest law of heaven for the restored (Ex. xx. 2); as when the Heidelberg Catechism places the Commandments under the head of “Our Gratitude.”

The work is not simply beneficent of benevolence; it is of *redeeming* grace. If we see only the philanthropy,—*philanthropy*, “kindness to man,” is the Greek for “love” in Tit. iii. 4,—we fail to see fully the philanthropy itself. The miracles proceed, not as emanations of electric influence flashing from an unconscious vase. They are “works,” through which the Worker manifests His glory, that His disciples may believe on Him. They are portions of one great “work,” calculated operations in a grand campaign, for the lost world’s redemption from tyranny of evil, and restoration of the heavenly order of God’s kingdom.

From the same point of view we can see into the *economy* of the miraculous working of one who, feeding thousands, said, “Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost.” The work of miracle is not for saving labour: Peter’s fish has come to teach him, not to enrich him; and the coin is counterbalanced by the blighting of the fig-tree. Excepting these two (“the two petty miracles”), the “mighty works” are not simply parables, but contributions to man’s temporal estate, in health, or means of living, or life itself. The wonders of grace and truth which came by the Messiah Jesus are thus not terrific, but are so far contrasted with those of Moses, who gave the law: in which that holiness appeared as an awful purity, which in grace wears the positive aspect of a free forgiving love (Matt. ix. 6—where see the “finger” pointing to the “fountain”). Otherwise the “distribution” is as follows: A philanthropist of boundless wealth, in a time of manifold woful want, goes among the people and gives but a little help to a few. To these he gives only help into a condition of ability to help themselves. The others he leaves to bear the burden of their life, and fight out its battles as they can. For, while his liberality is boundless as his wealth, it is wise forecasting. The plan of his goodness is to install the population in the dignity and happiness of self-help in that “good land” which He freely bestows on them as a possession for ever, being also the Creator and Redeemer of the lives He so enriches. He thus does not poison their life in its fountain by debasing them with needlessly helping them. And the help He gives to some has, for its leading purpose, that all should come to

know Him, and enter into His plan, so as to learn to serve Him with accompaniment of song, "To Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us unto our God kings and priests: to Him be glory and strength for ever and ever. Amen."

Hence the significance of the demonology, which in the Gospel history has a prominence apparently so commanding (cp. Luke xiii. 16, iv. 39, viii. 24; Matt. xvii. 18). The bizarre conception, which long had place in early speculations about atonement, of a ransom paid to *Satan* as the purchase of our freedom, had in the heart of it the thoroughly Christian principle, that man's restoration into blessed peace with God is not to be through mere physical force of omnipotence, as if by sheer Mohammedan *will* of a God who is not holy; but, "through the door," by the lawful way of *righteousness*. Righteousness is the healing sunlight which "dwelleth" in "the new heaven and the new earth," and which comes to be the blessed bread and wine of the new kingdom. Righteousness manifested in a great act of vindicatory justice, is (Rev. xv. 1-4) the burden of the song of Moses and the Lamb. Righteousness, at the hand of Moses, appears not only in Jehovah's mercifulness to the iniquities of Israel, but also in the severities of His judgment upon Egypt. And so in Canaan, when the Son of God appeared as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, He showed no mercy to the demons, but a face and a heart and a hand of never-moved pitiless severity, of unswerving *will* to punish them, in purpose to destroy them; so that when His judgments are abroad upon the earth, righteousness may be learned by the inhabitants of the world.

CHAPTER II.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES.

THE effect upon the mind produced by the historical process of inquiry, is like that of painting in Italian ink. The image that is to be produced is always the same. But the first application of the colouring matter produces only a faint and shadowy outline, hardly discernible. It is through repeated, frequent applications that the image is made to be distinctly clear, and unmistakable as a statue of marble or bronze. The vague presumption in favour of the truth of Christianity, created by its being an Apologetic religion, becomes greatly strengthened when we find it coming into occupation of the world, which it overcomes, and in which it makes all things new, by the purely spiritual power of a word. And now we shall find the external evidence proceeding in like manner, in the geometrical progression of a cumulative argument, always to the same conclusion, that "God was in Christ." What we have seen evidenced on the ground of Gospel history, in immediate connection with the earthly ministry of Christ, that we now shall see evidenced again on the ground of the Acts and Epistles, in connection with the Christian community, under the leadership of apostles and evangelists. And this will open our way to a yet further accession of external evidence from the Old Testament; as of Moses and Elias on the Mount of Transfiguration, appearing in their glory of fulfilment while they speak to Him who is declared to be the Son of God, so that His disciples shall hear them, of that *exodus* which He is destined to accomplish at Jerusalem.

In the New Jerusalem (Rev. xxi.) there was no visible temple. And in the Christianity of the new dispensation, the world saw only "atheism;" because there was no visible image nor symbol of Deity, and it was an unseen Christ that

was worshipped "as God." Yet the New Jerusalem was a strong fortress, strongly manned with skilful captains. For it had lofty walls; and on the pearly gates were shining the names of the twelve tribes; and in the foundations were "the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."

After His death on Calvary, Christ never showed Himself again to the world. He appeared to one (Acts ix. 4, 5) who, at that time an enemy, yet had been reconciled to God by the death of His Son. But to mankind in general, personal acquaintance with the Son of man was closed when the sepulchre was sealed upon His body. He showed Himself only (Acts x. 41) to those whom He had chosen out of the world, and who had been His friends and followers before He died upon the cross. Except by these, and by that one, "as if born out of due season," the Christ who died has never been seen alive by man upon the earth.

In relation, then, to evidence regarding Christ risen from the dead, we seem to be in a materially changed position as compared with our position when inquiring into His earthly ministry. With reference to the facts in the history of that ministry, the chosen witnesses were able (Acts ii. 20) to appeal for corroboration of their testimony to the knowledge which the Jews themselves had of the things which Jesus of Nazareth had said and done and suffered among them. But with reference to what became of Jesus after He died and was buried in the grave of Joseph of Arimathea, there is no such corroboration from men who have seen and heard Him themselves. From this point onward we have not *history* of Christ such as we have (Luke i. 1-4) in the evangelical narratives,—matters which for substance were in their nature public, and had been within the personal cognisance of foes and friends. What we now have is "*a testimony*;" and that (Acts v. 32) of witnesses who are either chiefs of the new religion, or devoted friends and followers of the Grand Master of it.

That, however, in no way enfeebles the evidence which we have found appropriate to the evangelic history. It merely affects the amount or kind of *corroboration* which that evidence receives from the Apostolic Age. And now, when we turn our eyes directly and exclusively upon this Apostolic Age

itself, we find that there is here a new, distinct, and independent evidence, which itself is a solid ground of historical belief. It is most appropriately historical in this respect, that it is removed from the great theological questions regarding incarnation, atonement, purchase of redemption, which present themselves to the mind in immediate indissoluble connection with everything in the personal ministry of Christ. This, no doubt, was felt by Arnold, when that true scholar and true master of historical criticism, on hearing of the "mythic theory" of the life of Jesus, scornfully asked whether it is to be believed that mythic history arose under the Roman empire, to be accepted by a Paul as the ground of faith and life! Though the Evangelic Age should be supposed to be for us a sort of cloudland in which there is nothing distinctly clear, yet here at least, in the Apostolic Age, we are out in the open of the general history of the world, where, to dispute the evidence of the plain facts, is to show that the disputer is blind.

We now shall transfer ourselves, with the historian Luke (Acts i. 1-12), from the period of the earthly ministry of Christ to what we may regard as the period of His resurrection, extending, within the New Testament history, to the close of the apostleship in John. In this Apostolic Age, and all through the Christian centuries, *the resurrection itself is the great fact*, the sunrise of the new light of life to mankind. And the evidence of that resurrection of the Son of Mary as a literal matter of fact, is recorded in Scripture, especially in the Gospel histories, in such a manner as to demand our careful consideration of the *primary testimonies* to that fact. But the apostles were especially the witnesses of that fact, with "signs of an apostle," miraculous attestation of their being the distinctively authorised witnesses on behalf of God. Their testimony, while embracing (Acts i. 21, 22) the whole period of their Master's earthly ministry, had the fact of resurrection for the special point and "burden" of it (Acts ii. 32, iv. 33). And one who was added to the original number, and was destined (Acts ix. 15) to be peculiarly God's witness to mankind regarding Christ, he not having been "from the beginning an eye-witness and minister of the word," was qualified by personal knowledge to bear witness regarding

Christ only as to the one fact of the resurrection. We therefore shall make a distinct study of the apostles in this relation as *the throned witnesses* (Matt. xix. 28), dwelling upon the case of Paul as a peculiarly illustrative sample of the value of the Apostolic testimony to that fact. Finally, there were even before the withdrawal of the bodily presence of Christ from earth "more than five hundred persons" who "*saw*" Him "at once" alive after His death on the Cross. They were ready on the day of Pentecost and afterwards to corroborate (Acts v. 32) the Apostolic testimony regarding the great fact. Them we shall regard as the nucleus of that Christian community which in their persons is coming into manifested existence as the new Israel of God. And, correspondingly, we shall consider the evidence constituted by *the Apostolic Church* of the new dispensation, with Monumental evidence.

The central subject of our study in this chapter being thus, *the primary testimonies* to the fact that the Son of Mary rose from the dead, we shall approach that centre as from a circumference that has been reached by us through a succession of distinctly marked steps,—beginning with a view of the matter as if from the outside of the Apostolic Age; then, within that age, proceeding to the generality of *the Apostolic Church*; and thence proceeding to the specialty of *the throned witnesses*; so as at last to reach those primary testimonies through the preparation of the successive stages.

SEC. 1. *As to the belief in Christ's resurrection.*

The proposal to leave the primæval belief in that resurrection aside as an unsolved historical conundrum, and *to go on, regardless of that belief, to account for the original history of Christianity in the world*, was a proposal to describe the action of the drama of Hamlet without the character of Hamlet, or to expound the solar system without mention of the sun. We have seen (Bk. i.) that the belief is what really *made* the original history of Christianity, as it is the sun that makes the life of the year, chasing away the winter and bringing in the spring and the summer and the autumn. This we saw in the Christianity of the second century, which we have

historically traced to an origin in the first. And now in the first century, looking at that Christianity as it first rises into view among mankind, *we refuse* to ignore the belief in resurrection; for that would be to shut our eyes to the history.

This we do, as historical inquirers, in the name of reason. It is *irrational*, it is blind unreason, at the outset of an historical inquiry to close one's eyes toward that one thing which is apparently the mainspring of the whole historical movement, the fountain of the stream, the life-giving sunshine of the year. It is not a method of ascertaining historical truth, but a way of making it impossible to ascertain the truth historically. And we, inquiring historically as to the truth of Christianity, will not pluck out our eyes, nor extinguish the sun, in order to spin cobwebs of our own invention, at the dictation of an atheistic metaphysic of Chinese and others.

The existence of the belief itself of the resurrection of Christ in the heart of the primæval Christianity, from the instant of the first beginning of this religion in the germ, is historically unquestioned and unquestionable. Unquestionably, as a fact of history, resurrection was the first cry of this religion when it was born into the world: resurrection was the light which dawned upon its earliest morning of life. And so down to this day, wherever there is Christendom, Resurrection is an article of primary belief, underlying all the detailed articulations of Christian thought and feeling and action. Even though the individual should not be personally a believer, he is under the influence of the belief, as of a new light of tender gladness, that has come into the world. We saw that, apart from the dawning of this light in the Old Testament, the world of mankind had come to despair of life. On the other hand, it is doubtful whether inside of Christendom it is physically possible for any one, the most thorough-going speculative atheist and materialist, to believe, in the bottom of his heart, that *for him* there is no future state of personal existence. Perhaps we have not duly considered the warrantableness of the description "home heathen." It may be that the heathenism which is not under influence of that new light of life is impossible where the

light is shining. Families which appear to be so utterly fallen in worldliness as not even to *disbelieve* in a future life, may yet have some vague feeling of it softening the miserable hardness of the present; such that, distinctly to *banish* that future from their life would be to darken their present, as if a lamp had been extinguished in their dwelling, or the sun had been veiled in their sky. In any case, Christendom *lives* in that belief of resurrection. And the "historical criticism," which cheerfully sets itself to investigate the history of Christianity without coming to any conclusion as to that belief, is a physical geographer who explores a river system without ascertaining whether the water is anything more than *painted* water, or a naturalist investigating a year's life of the world without ascertaining whether the sun of it is not a merely theatrical sun.

The incoherence meets us in that "critical" handling of the special case of Paul, which bids us leave over, as another unsolved historical conundrum, his belief in the appearance of the risen Christ to him on his way to Damascus. We are invited to regard that as only some sort of unaccountable impression made on the persecutor's mind. But the invitation does not come from reason inquiring historically. It comes from atheistic metaphysic speculating dogmatically. Paul himself, the only man who knows, and whose intelligence and truthfulness are unquestionable, assures us that what took place in broad daylight of noon was a real historical appearance to him of a glorious person who gave him to know that He was the Jesus whom Paul was persecuting. And this belief of Paul, supposing Him not to have been a deceiver nor deceived, would account for that career of his which has affected so profoundly the whole subsequent life of mankind. Inquiring, irrespectively of that belief, into the historical movement of Paulinism, we are again investigating the influences of a river or of a sun which may be only painted; though, strangely, we assume that the life which proceeds from influences of both is, of course, historically real!

So, generally, with reference to that whole apostolic movement which is the inauguration of the new life of the world, unfolded to view in the history of Christendom and Christian civilisation. We diligently trace the surface aspects of

influence in the river's course or the year's course. And we gravely assume that the things which thus we follow through time are historical realities. But as to the *fountain*, the *sun*, without which all these things are only painted nothings, we leave it an open question whether they are not merely imaginary or fictitious. What is the fountain or sun, according to those apostles and the Apostolic men themselves? It is the historical fact of the resurrection of Christ—or Christ risen in historical reality. This alone is their *fulcrum*, their *ποῦ στῶ*. It is the one only thing with which they set themselves to revolutionise the world. The commission which they have received from Christ is only this (Luke xxiv. 46–48), “Thus it is written, and thus it behoved the Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. *And ye are witnesses of these things.*”

So, correspondingly, what they say to mankind is (Acts v. 29–32), “(Then Peter and the other apostles said) . . . We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, and hanged on a tree: Him hath God exalted with His right hand a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins. *And we are witnesses of these things*; and so also is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him.” And as they thus spoke to the Jews, at the beginning of the great movement, so too they spoke to the Gentiles, when to them was given “repentance unto life.” To Cornelius and his friends (Acts x.) Peter declared the same “word (vers. 30–43) which God has sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ; He is Lord of all.” Accordingly, after giving an account of the Saviour's work on earth, the apostle went on to say: “*And we are witnesses* of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew, and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and showed Him openly; not to all the people, but *unto witnesses chosen before of God*, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead. And He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it was He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of

quick and dead. To Him give all the prophets witness, that, through His name, whosoever believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins."

That is what the apostles themselves declare to be the true continuous beginning of their movement, the fountain of its river, the sun of its year. They are not mere authors of a new philosophy or morality of nature, nor merely the publishers of a new edition of the religion of nature; they are *ministers* of a new supernatural revelation; they are heralds proclaiming the free gift of a supernatural redemption from the sovereign grace of God to a ruined race of men. And, correspondingly, as to the mainspring, fountain, sunrise of all the movements thus begun, they are *witnesses* to the historical Christ, in the historical reality of His resurrection as "manifestation" of His glory,"—the glory (Rom. i. 4) of His person as the Son of God; and the glory of that grace of God (Eph. i. 6, 7) "wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved; in whom we have the redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins."

Quite clearly, if we inquire into the subsequent history as if the belief of resurrection had not existed, then it is not Christianity we are inquiring about, but a mere invention of our own imagination. For that belief in resurrection was not a thing outside of the movement, a fifth wheel on the machinery of the action. It was in the heart of everything, and was the life and soul of all. Thus, as to *evidence*. Chalmers, a practical man, is earnestly favourable to the "portable" evidences of Christianity. The resurrection was the *grand portable evidence* which went everywhere, to critics, and homes, and individual hearts, with power of demonstration, evidencing itself and everything else; as the sunrise discloses the sun and all the world. On this account it is of great importance that men should listen to the apostles so far as simply to consider, as a thing gravely asserted by them, *the bare literal fact* of the rising of the Son of Mary from the dead. There is probably no one in Christendom whose mind is not, every Lord's day, in some way brought near to the thought of that resurrection. But there must be myriads of professing Christians who have never seriously *considered* what is folded in this fact, if it really be a fact.

To many, a serious consideration of the bare literal fact, that this man has come alive from the dead, might be the occasion of a spiritual resurrection, a wholly changed life, as the manifestation of it was to Saul of Tarsus. It might be as a new beginning of life to the Churches if professing Christians were simply, every Sabbath morning when the bells are ringing that "the Lord is risen indeed," to ask themselves, *Is it really so? Has the Son of Mary risen from the dead? And if He have, What then? What for me, for us, for all is the significance of that resurrection?*

One result of it is, that the question of *evidence* is made simple. A "historical" critic finds that the Gospels cannot have been published so early as the last quarter of the first century; because the Christians had not at that time grown into such belief in miracle as would have made it possible for them to believe in the Gospel miracles. We have seen that, in fact, at the middle of that century they abundantly believed in apostolic miracles, which must have been far more copious in number than the evangelic miracles. But apart from that, the critic has forgotten that, beyond all possibility of doubt, those Christians believed, from the very beginning of Christianity, in the stupendous crowning miracle of the resurrection of Christ. How, then, could they have any difficulty in believing in those miracles which the Gospels ascribe to His working during life here? Even the greatest of those miracles, raising a man from the dead, what is that as compared with the dead man's raising himself from the grave? Walking on the sea is surely far less wonderful than ascending into heaven; even as turning water into wine is little more than a figure of speech in comparison with destroying Satan's kingdom, regeneration, new creation of mankind forming a heavenly kingdom of "righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

But the resurrection is not only thus a crowning evidence of the gospel, it is itself the gospel. From the fact of the resurrection of the Son of man, it immediately follows that (Rom. i. 4) He is the Son of God. The Father's having raised Him up is the divine assurance to mankind of there now being for guilty mankind pardon and complete salvation through Him who, having been "delivered for our offences,

is risen for our justification." So that all the guaranteed new life of faith is seen flowing from that fountain. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again; that is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

But now we perceive that the "historical" criticism which professes to leave the resurrection belief alone as an unsolved conundrum really does not do so. That criticism really kills the belief before throwing it away. For it makes it to have been a belief in resurrection *apart from free salvation* by divine redeeming grace in Christ. The criticism has based its endeavour to account for the primæval Christian history upon the supposition, and it has asserted as a fact, that the Christians originally did *not* believe in that free salvation by the glorious grace of God in Christ. It has proceeded upon the view that Christ and the original apostles taught a doctrine of justification by our works of the law. *And that contradicts the primæval Christian belief of resurrection.*

The original belief in resurrection was not simply that Christ had shown Himself alive before going away into heaven; as Minerva, before parting from them, disclosed her super-human nature to Telemachus and the sons of Nestor. It has always been, that He is exalted as a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins. *No Christian has ever believed in a resurrection of Christ that was not thus in its essence a cardinal action in the great work of salvation by grace; in virtue of which, continuously, that great High Priest*

Pursues in heaven His mighty plan,
The Saviour and the Friend of man.

It is not merely that there is not a trace in history of such a piece of paganism on the part of Christians as believing in a resurrection which would be the mere apotheosis of a hero, or, at the utmost, a repetition of the translation of Enoch and Elias. The whole history of the first two centuries is blazing full of contradiction of the suggestion of that paganism, as the world is full of light when the sun shines clear at noon. The two or three scraps of information which have been distorted and magnified into evidence in favour of the suggestion, are illustrations of contrast most manifestly *not* pertaining to the main stream of the Christian history, but being merely sticks

and straws that have been drawn into the current of it, or promiscuous refuse of worldliness deposited in the eddies of it.

The Christianity of which the history is thus "critically" expounded is a Christianity that has no historical existence. It is an imaginary stream, existing in order that the fountain may be imaginary. We are bent on having only a painted sun in the firmament, and so we create a fictitious world of unreal spring and summer and autumn here below. In short, in our historical criticism, Memory, which is the mother of the Muses, gives place to Invention—in this case the daughter of an atheistic metaphysic. The reason of that imaginary history is mere *naturalism*, dominant in our views of man and of the universe.

While resurrection, in the belief of the primæval Christians, was inseparable from free salvation by grace, that salvation, again, in the Christian belief, had for its correlate presupposition the *ruin of mankind by sin*. We know the New Testament pictures of that ruin, as a death in trespasses and sins; as an exposure to the wrath of God, revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; as a peril of eternal death, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. It is impossible to exaggerate the power of the influence of these awful conceptions upon the mind and heart and life of the Christians of the primitive time, in impelling them to "flee from the wrath to come," and to "persuade men," as themselves, "knowing the terrors of the Lord." A profound conviction of the transcendental evil of sin, as *the* thing which has brought ruin, deep and irremediable, on man through alienation from the life of God, was the ultimate spring of that great upheaval which changed the heart and life of the world. It is this conviction that moved men to come to Christ the Saviour;—poor, that they might be rich in Him; hungry, that they might be satisfied with His goodness; weary and heavy laden, that He might give them rest unto their souls. Without some real conception of the state of mind which is constituted by that profound conviction of sin, it is impossible for any one really to *know* the original history of Christianity. From which it follows—

The criticism at present in question is thus *incompetent*

(1 Cor. ii. 15). For as merely naturalistic, it has *no conception of sin*. It excludes from view the moral nature, the rational free agency, the personality and will, both of God and of man. It thus has no place for conscience, *moral* feeling of merit and demerit, *moral* judgment, whether of approbation or of condemnation. It thus is blind as well as deaf—though it should not be dumb—relatively to that whole system of thoughts and activities which are represented by the expressions “kingdom of God” and “kingdom of Satan.” It is no more capable than a fairy is of entering through sympathetic comprehension into knowledge of the *religious* life of men, or even the spiritual antipathies of demons, as affected by the conception of sin. How, then, can it be a competent criticism of Christianity, such as this religion was in the “day of its espousals,” upon the covenant footing of “Be ye holy, for I am holy”? “What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?”

According, then, to the primæval belief, that (1 Cor. xv.) resurrection of Christ is vitally related to the fall of the first Adam from uprightness, and the ruin of mankind in that fall, that resurrection is not seen by us, so that we shall be able even to estimate fairly the evidence for its reality, if we do not look at it in its connection with the ruin it presupposes. We are not even inquiring about the resurrection of Christ which is believed in by Christians, unless we look upon Christ as the last Adam, so as to see in His resurrection the opening again for mankind of a Paradise Regained.

SEC. 2. *Monumental evidence: Christendom with its Lord's day.*

The name of the “Lord's day” first appears in a writing of the last apostle. The observance of it can be traced historically, by means of external evidences, back to his day. Thus, by an edict of the first Christian emperor, the Christian Lord's day came as a festival in the place of the heathen Sun Day. Long before that, Polycarp had travelled to Rome for the purpose of seeking an agreement about the Easter observance, which could not have had a meaning if the Lord's day had not at that time been in observance among all Christians as

the weekly day of religious rest (the question was between two modes of calculating the date of Easter, one of which depended on that week). Polycarp's younger contemporary, Justin Martyr, mentions the Christian observance of the Sun Day as their stated festival for public worship (he is speaking to heathens, and employs that heathen name of the day). Historically, there need be no hesitation in regarding as the Lord's day that "stated day" on which, before the morning light, Pliny's Bithynians assembled to worship "Christ as God." That was within ten years of John the Divine. The chain of testimonies, thus arising incidentally, is curiously complete. In a visibly unbroken continuity it connects the Christianity of our day with the life of one who saw Christ alive on the third day after the crucifixion. The Lord's day has always meant that the Lord is risen. And the observance of this appears historically as a continuous witness-bearing of Christendom to the fact of that resurrection, from the day of Pentecost to the present hour.

Here there is call for the exercise of what may be described as historic sense, or, feeling for reality, which sometimes appears to be completely wanting in "historical" criticism. There comes into our view, in a manner of impressive grandeur, in the connection with the observance, that *historical consciousness* in a community, which makes the community to be itself monumental. The Bible religion is not only in the Bible, nor only in the hearts and lives of individual believers; it also is in the historical consciousness of a community, and in this form can be distinctly traced as far back as to the time of Abraham:—in Heb. xi.—xii. it is intimated that it really reaches back to the beginning of the history of mankind fallen. We have a real meaning in our mind when we speak of being of Abraham's and Abel's religion. It is possible to be in historical communion of religion with patriarchs before and after the Flood; as it is to be in contemporaneous communion with the brother who sits beside us at the table of the Lord. And this is monumental evidence of the religion. *No other religion has ever formed for itself such an historical consciousness*, extending throughout the duration of fallen humanity on earth. And as the true God is without variableness or shadow of turning, the presumption is that the one religion which has

continuously persisted throughout all the changing ages is the religion of the true unchanging God.

The historical consciousness appearing in the Lord's day has a certain clear distinctness in the mind of peoples. But there may be principles in continuous operation in communities where the consciousness is not distinctly clear. It seems a paradox to speak of a knowledge that is present and operative in a mind that is not aware of the possession; it looks like saying that a mind can have in it what it does not possess. Nevertheless it may be true. The most learned of mankind is in possession of all his knowledge; it is in his mind when he is in a dreamless sleep. The student who has taken a mathematical problem with him into the deep sleep of his weariness, finds the solution wrought out in his mind when he awakes. And there are wonderful processes connected with unconsciousness in the infant mind, which it may be well to glance at here and now (cp. p. 209). The earliest education is before the human being has learned to speak or stand. In that most infant school of *alma mater*, Nature, the student has laid the foundation of all future knowledges, including a working acquaintance with the universe as described in Gen. i.; and more wonderfully still, has mastered the body and mind, so far as to be able to make use of the eyes, notwithstanding Bishop Berkeley and others. Probably no attainment made in mature years, by any prodigy of genius, is really half so wonderful as that which a healthy baby makes in learning to see.

It may be of use to us afterwards to consider what the attainment involves. It must have been made through some *rational* process. We saw that Condillac's statue represents a crass absurdity. And even the expression, "simple apprehension," is only a crude make-shift for convenience of the schools of logic; a sort of mental rule of thumb. For without subscribing to the "prodigious" maxim of Leibnitz, that in order to know a monad perfectly we must know the universe in that monad, we can see that there is really no such thing as purely "simple" apprehension. There must always be something of *comprehension*. The "mirror" of the child's mind cannot be merely passive, in drawing in the milk of knowledge from the breast of the great mother.

There must be some *action* of the mind, and that a *rational* action (*λογικός*),—though not necessarily formal, syllogistic,—in order to assimilation of what is presented externally to perception; so that it may enter into the structure as well as into the furniture of the infant mind perceiving. Otherwise there is no attainment of possession; and what takes place is not communicating knowledge to the infant Moses, but plastering his ark.

Yet, of all that rational process, when the child begins to speak there is not one trace remaining. At the age of seven, when he goes to human schools, he has finished a vast curriculum of that most infant education, regarding which his memory may retain some irrelevant outside trifles; but of the real inward processes of his laying the foundations of all knowledges, every trace has disappeared, as the marks of the spring ploughing are invisible in the summer cornfield. It is not that only has he now lost the recollection of that past activity of his mind; there may not have been a distinct consciousness of the activity during that past itself. The infant may have no more consciousness of what is going on in its mind than a tree is conscious of drawing in vital air through its leaves. Nevertheless, the processes must have been rational, for they were processes of mind. And the result of a process so obscure is clear, distinct, and certain as a star. So that when good Bishop Berkeley, plunging into the obscurity, questions the intention of our external perception, Dr. Thomas Reid, as bold as the Apostle Paul, will protest against that dreaming in the name of “common sense.” And Hume, though, “for the amusement of the learned world,” he can make out of the bewilderment a universal scepticism, yet in the real business of life—such as drawing one’s salary—will speak of that as only a “philosophical delirium.”

Now in the historical consciousness of a community there may, in like manner, be a sort of primary knowledge, which entered into its mind in its first formation. The principles thus deposited in the common mind at that origin may continue to be and operate in the common life all through the following history; and be operative, not only for the sustenance and manifestation of the life, but for the exercised guardianship and regulation of it; as a Christian *mind* of the

community, or spiritual common sense; whose instinct may sometimes be found more faithful and true than the logic of the divines. The Christian Church may thus be itself a monumental community, so that its existence shall be a testimony to the principles through which it is created and sustained (cp. Col. i. 17).

But in the life of this community there have always been monuments more articulately definite in their testimony. One of these is the Lord's day, the Christian Sabbath, observed in commemoration of the resurrection of Christ. And now, for illustration of the significance and value of this kind of evidence, we will make use of the famous four marks of Charles Leslie (*A Short and Easy Method with the Deists*). These marks are intended for demonstration of the historical reality of an alleged event: the two in Leslie's view being, the supernatural deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and the miraculous accomplishment of redemption by Christ. His contention is, that if an event have his four marks, it *cannot but* be historically real. He does not mean that every event that is historically real must have those marks. What he means is, that if any event have them all, it is *impossible* that that event should not be real and historical. It is said that Conyers Middleton, with all his antiquarian learning, ability, acuteness, and scepticism, confessed, that in twenty years he had been unable to discover any one really non-historical event that has Leslie's four marks.

It will serve our purpose at a later stage, in considering the external evidence in connection with Moses and the prophets, if we now consider the nature of those marks in connection with Israel's deliverance from Egypt, before proceeding to apply them to the proof of the resurrection of Christ in connection with the Lord's day. The marks, roughly speaking, are, *visibility, publicity, monumental observance*, — including *memorial action*,—and *contemporaneity* of the institution of the monument with the alleged event. It may be observed, that as to Israel's deliverance from Egypt, Leslie is satisfied with showing that there was an Exodus, in the vague sense of a great and wonderful deliverance at the beginning of Israel's history. It goes to show that we now are in some respects more favourably placed

than he was to observe that in our day there is no need of any labour on behalf of Apologetics to demonstrate the historical reality of such an Exodus. The reality of such an Exodus is now an established and accepted fact of general history of the world; so that a writer on general history (Bunsen) of highest rank says, that Israel's Exodus is the true beginning of history for mankind. What Apology now has to do in connection with that Exodus, is only to maintain—and prove—that it had a supernatural redemption in the heart of it.

In connection with that Exodus, the nature of the marks can be seen as follows. The *first* mark, visibility, means that the alleged event must be such as could have been observed by the bodily senses of men. That, of course, was a character of all the Exodus movement of deliverance. From the time of Moses' and Aaron's arrival in Egypt, all through the campaign of the plagues, down to Israel's departure through the Red Sea, everything was of a nature to be perceptible to human eyes and ears. The *second* mark, publicity, is in this case coincident with the first. The great event was open to inspection of all the world, from Goshen to Sinai. The Egyptians did not afterwards appear as witnesses. But they were not needed. That is not really called for by the *purpose* of this mark. The purpose is, that the *manner* of the occurrence should prevent the possibility of misapprehension or fraudulent collusion as to the fact of occurrence. And that purpose, of course, is amply secured by the manner of the occurrence of the Exodus. On the *third* mark, we reserve a note till we come to the case of resurrection of Christ.

Regarding the *fourth* mark, contemporaneousness, Leslie, whose writing (in the *Short and Easy Method with a Deist*) is in the easy familiar form of a letter to a friend, in his general statement speaks with some looseness, as if, in accompaniment to the monumental observance, there had been a need of some *other* knowledge of its primæval institution. The fact is, and it is the very point of Leslie's own argument, that there is *no* need of any evidence outside of the observance itself. The *observance* has within itself the proof of its own primæval antiquity. That proof is constituted by the *manner* or form of the observing. The

memorial action is to be such as to *mean*, that this observance has always been going on since the period of the event commemorated. The observance is thus to have on the face of it, or in the heart of it, a *profession* of being of primæval antiquity. Thus in the Passover (Ex. xii. 26–28) there was not only the feasting on the lamb, but also that sacramental address (Ex. xii. 26–28) which says to every communicant, that this feast has been observed yearly ever since the age of Moses. The result of this is, *in the observance itself, a demonstrative proof of its primæval antiquity*. For, suppose that, in any one year later than the age of Moses, it had been attempted to *originate* a Passover festival, that is to say, a festival professing *to have been* observed continually down to that year, then everybody would at once perceive imposture, knowing that in fact there had not been such observance before now. Leslie takes for illustration a proposal that every one should cut off a joint of one of his fingers. That, of course, would at once be made a proof that the observance had *not* been going on in this community,—seeing that the population had the joints of their fingers complete. This illustration of his own shows that Leslie's general statement, the monumental observance *must have been begun* at the time of the alleged event, makes the “mark” too broad, and spoils it. The antiquity of the observance is proved by the manner and the fact of *the observance now*. And what the argument requires in this mark is only that *the observance now*, in the manner or form of it, shall *bear* to be of that primæval antiquity, or, *profess* to have come down from the time of the alleged event.

Of the argument in its application to the Lord's day, the conclusion is, that *it is impossible that Christ should not have risen from the dead!* The marks 1 and 2, *visibility* and *publicity*, will, in connection with that resurrection, be abundantly verified by us when, in our last section (4) of this chapter, we come to examine the “primary testimonies” to the resurrection. But we here have to make a note as to mark 3;—as to the *memorial action* required in the monumental observance. The two New Testament monuments referred to by Leslie, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, have memorial actions,—the washing with water and the giving

and receiving of bread and wine,—more or less distinctly answering the purpose of this *third* mark. It suits our general course of inquiry, with reference to the resurrection of Christ, to select as a monument that Lord's day which is appropriately the memorial of the resurrection. But we so far put ourselves to disadvantage, in that the Lord's day has not in it any distinct memorial action;—such, *e.g.*, as would have been a *performance* of resurrection in some rite—like that of the Ammergau festival. The simple festive resting on the first day of the week was no doubt a character of the old heathen Sun Day. The Lord's day is connected in men's minds with His rising from the dead, not by the *form* of observing a religious rest, but by the universally *understood intention* of the Christian peoples in their observance of this day,—their intention, namely, to commemorate that resurrection; an argument so simple and clear, almost like ocular demonstration, to a conclusion of such incalculably vast importance as the resurrection of Christ, requires to be dwelt upon, even with tediousness of insistence, under the form of exposition; because the very simplicity of the process of attaining to a result so momentous is apt to create a feeling of incredulity. Any man capable of reflection, who will reflect for a little, cannot fail to perceive that if it really be shown to be an historical fact that the Son of Mary rose from the dead, then practically the whole strength of unbelief is broken, and the broken heart of man finds rest in believing. The whole “historical criticism,” for instance, which proceeds upon the view that miracle is impossible, that there is no supernatural, etc. etc., is simply demolished at one stroke by the way of fact. And there is hardly an intelligent man in Christendom who does not know and feel that if only *he* were sure that Jesus Christ is now alive in heaven, all the infidelity in the world would to his apprehension be mere rubbish in comparison with that commanding fact. Can it be, then, is it credible, that the fact should be really proved by a thing so simple as the action of Christians, who may never think of such a result of their action in going to church at the sound of Sabbath bells?

Though the thing at first sight be incredible in the simplicity of it, we are not unfamiliar with such results of simple

process. On Scottish Criffel an engineer surveyor is able to converse with a colleague upon English Skiddaw, though the Solway Firth between them should be raging dark with storms. And the simple process in that wonder is reflecting a ray of light from a mirror, so as to send it, according to preconcert, signalling through space across the sea from one mountain to the other. And the astronomer knows that the star whose light ray now reaches him upon the earth, may have perished from existence in the firmament before the death of Christ. The vastness of the distance of some of the fixed stars, requiring so many centuries for the transition, from them to us, of a thing so swift as light (all but as swift as thought), does not, in the grand simplicity of the process, affect the sureness of the result. That ray of light not only assures him that the star must have existed; it even enables him, by means of *spectrum* analysis, to judge what must have been the particular constitution of that star, though eighteen centuries ago it should have ceased to exist.

Now the Lord's day observance appears to have in it such a simple sureness. It does not, in order to its having evidential value, need even that historical consciousness of the Christian community through which it holds its place among institutions. The Church might all through the centuries have been unconscious of its monumental importance, as an aqueduct is unconscious of the vital importance of the water which it conveys into a city. Generation after generation might have been unconscious of the very meaning of the testimony which is being borne through their tradition, as the poles and wires of the telegraph are unconscious of the tidings which they bear so swiftly thrilling round the world. The result is independent of the intelligence, the will, the intention of the Christian peoples; it is made inevitable simply by the fact of *their now having* the observance with the generally understood *meaning*, we observe this day in memory of the resurrection of Christ, according to a custom that has come down to us from the time of the event. It is not necessary that they should *know* that it has come down: it suffices that they *believed* it.

Here we may assure ourselves by considering the *impossibility* of a *Lord's day's* originating, beginning to be observed,

at any period later than the first century. At first, remembering how many rites and festivals have originated almost by spontaneous generation, one might imagine that it would be a far from difficult thing to introduce a festival in itself so appropriate as the Lord's day. But, in fact, we can perceive upon a little reflection it would be really impossible; as it would be impossible to induce men to begin to cut a joint off a finger, upon the representation that that has been done by the men of all preceding generations from the first century. For let us suppose a time at which the Lord's day observance is not in existence. Then what, in order to originate a Lord's day observance, has to be accomplished at that supposed time? It is not simply that men should begin to observe the heathen Sun Day as a Christian festival in commemoration of the resurrection of Christ. To bring that about might be difficult; but it would not be impossible. The heathen festival of Yule, for instance, has among some communities crept somehow into observance as a Christian festival in memory of His birth, of which no man knows the date. But that has not been upon a representation, *that Christmas had been so observed in the Christian world all over from the beginning*. In fact, Christmas has *never* been observed all over the Christian world, as the Lord's day is, and has been observed, so long and so far as our knowledge extends. And there is hardly a corner of Christendom so dark in ignorance as to make it possible for Christians to *imagine* that Christmas, from the first century downward, has been observed by all Christians in memory of the Saviour's birth. In connection with Leslie's argument, we have studiously avoided recollection of the fact that the primæval antiquity of the Lord's day observance can be historically proved by external evidence, irrespectively of the form or meaning of observing it at present. We saw this proof in outline indication from Constantine's edict, through Polycarp and Justin Martyr, to the Bithynian "stated day" of Pliny, as if an echo of John's, "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day." It would carry us away from our present inquiry to expiscate the New Testament indications of inaugural observance of the First Day of the Week, and the question of its communion with the Sabbath of the Decalogue. But we now must lay some emphasis on the fact that, apart from Leslie's

argument, the Lord's day itself, demonstrably of primæval antiquity, and having no real meaning apart from commemoration of the Lord's having risen from the dead, is a very important monumental evidence of the historical reality of that resurrection.

Returning to the general subject of the Christian community as a witness to that vitally important reality, we now direct our attention to what, in the historical consciousness of a community, may be described as a *primary* knowledge of an originaive fact. The knowledge of gravitation may be said to be in the mind of a community, which may have completely forgotten the processes through which it first came into the knowledge and belief. Paul (1 Cor. xv.) assumed the existence of such a knowledge of Christ's resurrection in the mind of the Corinthian Church. He not only (vers. 1-8) reminded them of the historical proof through which they had first been brought into the knowledge and belief. When he has fairly got into the heart of his remonstrance, he appeals to *the Christian consciousness* of the community he is addressing. He points to living knowledge and belief of that resurrection as a thing in their minds, at the foundation of all their Christian life, as if that knowledge had now become a part of the structure of their mind, so as to be self-evident or axiomatic in effect, though (like our ostensibly immediate perception of distance and magnitude) not so in historical reality. Every Scotchman *knows* that Robert Bruce was in chief command on the winning side at Bannockburn; but how many can *prove* it? Certainly not one in ten thousand. Here again we perceive that a community, in its traditional beliefs or impressions, may be a really most important conservator of historical fact. And it is a fair question whether the testimony to the Lord's resurrection, thus *continuing to be borne* by Christendom, is not of evidential value equal to that of the "more than five hundred persons at once," who had known Him before His death, and after it "*saw*" Him alive.

We now fix our attention on the primæval community. It is a very weighty circumstance, that every one of those Christians bore witness at the peril of his life, and at the certain and immediate cost of losing much of what men value

most in life. But we pass from that well-worn topic to dwell for a little upon the *moral earnestness* and *competent intelligence* of the primæval Christians not apostles.

Their moral earnestness was such as we have seen in the second - century Christians. And we remember that here, in the first century, we are a step nearer than we were in the second to that *fontal purity* from which, for instance, with reference to strict veracity, the Church began early to show symptoms of degenerating into conformity to the world. There is a real internal evidence in what was noted by Thomas Carlyle, that "the Bible is the most *honest* book in the world." It is essentially honourable—clean. It thus is guarded against suspicion of the rotten trickishness of forgery in its authorship; and those whose character was formed in its original fountain are not likely to have lent themselves to false witness regarding God and religion. To the same effect there falls to be applied what we have observed in another application—namely, that the original movement of Christianity in the world was very powerfully under the influence of a conviction of *the evil of sin*, that is, the influence of *a moral* conception of *conscience* toward God. *That* is not favourable to forgery for concealment of imposture.

At the Synod of Jerusalem we see, along with the apostles, "elders and brethren." Suppose that the apostles are insincere,—that Paul has invented "another gospel," pretending it is the original gospel of Christ; and that "the twelve," turning their backs on their own selves, apostatising from Christ, have given themselves over as the tools of this revolutionary ex-persecutor. Still, "*the elders and brethren*" are sincere. *They* believe that Christ is of God. Their only hope of life is in *the truth* regarding Him. Even small points, which the apostles thought indifferent, have been found convulsing the whole Church; because the "brethren," perhaps mistakenly, yet sincerely, thought that *the truth* as it is in Christ was affected. Perhaps they are not first-class judges of subtle theological distinctions. But they are highly qualified for the far more important office of *guarding the faith* which has been once delivered to the saints. History shows that the faith, imperilled by unfaithful teachers, may be saved by the earnestness of belief among "the brethren."

Though Paul had been dishonest and a liar, and had seduced the original apostles into apostasy from the original teaching of Christ, yet they all have "the elders and the brethren" to reckon with. And we happen to know about a number of those who, coming after "the apostles," would take rank as "elders." They were such as Timothy, Titus, Apollos, Luke, Mark, Barnabas, Philip. There must have been in that rank many of the best and truest men on earth, with mind strongly moved, and understanding exercised to distinguish things that differ. And along with them was the Macedonian phalanx of the "brethren," such as we saw in Bithynia in the first age of Christianity, giving their life in the faith that Christ has brought from heaven the truth of God, and having hope of life only in the truth. Would *they*, at the bidding of twelve apostles, all the worse because betraying trust as apostles, abandon the truth of God in order to embrace an infamous lie of Paul? *Credat Judæus!* Although there had been twelve infidel Pauls, and 144,000 apostolic apostates, there was hardly a private Christian of that first age who would not have been prepared to rise up against them all, and withstand them to the face because they were to be blamed, and say to them all in God's name—"If Paul, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel than that which we have received from Christ, let him be accursed."

As to *intelligence*, qualification to form a sound judgment, it is well to remember what is the "theory" to which "historical criticism" has been driven in order to make room for unbelief. It has to be supposed that, somewhat later, while pious knaves, of whom nobody ever heard until of late, performed miracles of genius in the way of forgery, the primitive Christians, as a community, so far from sharing in that genius, or even possessing talent or any sense were imbecile to that uttermost degree in which a man does not know whether he is asleep or awake, nor distinguish between reality and fancy, even in matters of life and death, for eternity as well as time.

"If such things be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" If the second-century Christians who *created* the (fictitious) Christianity of the first century were intellectually so very low, then what are we to think of

the first-century Christians; *not* those in the New Testament Scripture, but those whom that forgery conceals; those who, within less than half a generation, allowed themselves to be tricked out of a religion for which they had been ready to die, by a few Jews who (like the Jews in the Jerusalem siege) had furious quarrels among themselves, while all conspired at last in rejecting the doctrine of Christ and putting in place of it that of the upstart Paul? It is possible for *moral* baseness to find "in every deep a lower deep." But, intellectually, even the wits of the *Scriblerus* club reached a profundity of *bathos* than which there could be nothing more profound; since nothing can be darker than sheer blackness of darkness. But if we will try to picture to ourselves an intensification of darkness like that of Egypt, which "might be felt," then there, in that "palpable obscure," we may see the thing which, according to the requirements of this "theory," has to occupy the place and play the part of a *mind* in the Christian community of the first century.

The brilliant darkness thus required by the theorising serves, through illustration of contrast to the only possible reality, to pour strong light on the historical fact. The effect of that *chiaro oscuro* of "historical" criticism is to make us the more vividly aware of the fact, that in the first century the disciples of the apostles really must have had some little modicum of sense, and cannot have been altogether dead asleep. We need not suppose that every one of them was qualified to be a professor of historical criticism. For it was not then incumbent on ordinary Christians to compete with one another in invention of histories exhibiting no break, nor "gap," nor true beginning, nor any free agency of God or man, but an absolute continuity, according to prescription of atheistic fatalism. What they had to do in order to qualify as witnesses was only, with a certain regard to the Ninth Commandment or its equivalent in the heart, to consider in a simple way, as in the fear of God and in the love of the true life of themselves and children, a simple matter.

Consider, for example, the kindly barbarians of Melita (Acts xxviii. 1-6), disciples at the lowest stage of discipleship, only beginning to begin to be. The wonder of Paul's not being killed by the viper does not paralyse *us*, whom Peter

(Mark xvi. 18) has prepared for such things, and who have learned from Paul himself, in one of his unquestionable letters (Rom. xv. 18, 19), that, for long before this time, always (ver. 20) breaking up new ground, he has been going on working miracles all the way round from Jerusalem to Illyricum. As to "the barbarous people," if they did not, like Plato, "reason well"—at least they *reasoned*. It happens that the conclusion at which they arrived, namely, that the wonder was a manifestation of divinity in this religion, is precisely the conclusion which "founded" Christendom among Jews and Gentiles, and has created Christian civilisation. But it does not square with the philosophy of Hegel, the Tavistic Chinese, and Zeno *plus* Epicurus. We therefore shall suppose that they reasoned *ill*—their hearts being better than their heads. Still, they did reason; so far showing that now they were not utterly fatuous, but had been so far roused from torpor like the viper.

So at Lystra (Acts xiv. 8–18), where Paul is said to have performed one of the many miracles he speaks of to the Romans. Here, too, the people were barbarians. But they were rational creatures, having a gift of speech (Lycaonian). They were only in the lowest of M. Comte's stages of human progress, namely, the theological. And Paul, more advanced on that stage, vehemently objected to their doctrine *in hypothesis*, that is, in the application of it to making *him* a god, and offering him sacrifice. But *in thesis*, that is, in its principle that there *is* a god, appropriately "manifested" through miracle, and to be acceptably approached through sacrifice of blood, they, too, precisely anticipated Christendom and the new civilisation of the world. By and by it will appear (Acts xvii.) what the acceptance of that theology will cost the believers; namely, the bitter scorn of certain philosophers "of the Epicureans and of the Stoics," with mockery of a populace that has sunk from being a people,—a loss which has sometimes proved a gain; as, for instance, when the people of Zurich were saved from having a notorious infidel from the Tübingen school thrust upon them as a professor of Christian theology. But in the meantime we see that those barbarians, too, *reason* about the plain matter of fact before their eyes. It is true that the thing is impossible,—an in-

curable lameter, a man impotent from birth, to be cured by a word of Paul ! That is quite against the philosophy of some atheistic professors of theology, not to speak of miscellaneous atheists. But the barbarians do not care. In that infantile education we spoke of, they learned to use their eyes in the manner that is so puzzling to good Bishop Berkeley—and to the rest of us if we had not been thoughtless about the matter. They have not got into use of coloured spectacles of atheism calling itself philosophy. And, though the thing *should* be impossible, they cannot help that; that is no business of theirs. The thing is a plain fact there before their eyes. The inference they draw is theological; and the theology is tangled at the outset, like Milton's new-created lion "pawing to be free." But their eyes are good witnesses to a fact.

At Ephesus, again (Acts xix.), most famous centre of Asian civilisation, the people could surely reason. For we see that they could make speeches, with very great noise, as if they had been Parisians, fellow-citizens of Renan, in the capital of "the universe;" and could show themselves amenable to the reason of superior force of order, as the Parisians, too, are capable of showing themselves, because they have some sense. There Paul, after three months' toiling at evangelistic work in the synagogue, laboured in the general community two years. Between Jews and Gentiles he must have made many converts; forming that Ephesian Church he so loved, and to which he wrote a first-class Epistle. The city became radiant as a centre of diffusing Christianity, and was the last "see" of the only Universal Bishop *de facto* that the world has seen — John the Divine. There Paul worked many miracles, some of them so uncommon (*οὐ τὰς τυχεύσας*) among miracles, that the historian has to mention them. And these miracles were, no doubt, watched by keen eyes. Apollos was one of some twelve Christians who, earnest about religion, were not blinded by prepossession in favour of Paul; they were not even acquainted with the movement represented by Paulinism. Sharp-eyed unfriendly critics were no doubt those Jews who had not believed, and might be heated with the memory of Paul's "disputing" in their synagogues; their "vagabond fellows," "exorcists," show that

they believed in his miracles, by an attempted imitation, which is a dismal failure. When his success has gone to such a height that the empire of heathenism there is shaken, Demetrius and the other craftsmen, who depend on idolatry for bread, raise that theological uproar on behalf of Diana of which the whole world has heard.

The hostile Jews and the Gentiles then at Ephesus had among them, no doubt, abundant ability as well as inclination to detect any fraud, if any such there had been. The converts who gave so striking a proof of earnestness (ver. 19) must have satisfied themselves before adhering to this religion of self-sacrifice. Against the Christian cause there was everything that could be in any seat of learned civilisation in the world. For it, there was one man of "weak speech" and "contemptible bodily presence." To *us* it appears that he *must* have had along with him the power of God. But that is not the question. The question is, whether the men who became Christian in those circumstances were absolutely destitute of intelligence. We have no reason to imagine that they were. A community of Christians capable of appreciating the Epistle to the Ephesians must have contained something of high intelligence. But there was no need of any specially high intelligence. The matter was simple. The facts were there before their eyes. The only difference between them and a "historical" critic of our day is, that they *saw* the things which he may declare to be impossible; and that they were not prejudiced in favour of Christianity as he may by prepossessions be biassed against it,—in fact their prepossessions were hostile, and they had most powerful worldly motives to *disbelieve* in this religion if they could.

At Corinth he had before that time laboured eighteen months. There his ministry reached not only that Achaian province which was intellectually a centre of Western civilisation, but in effect the whole Roman empire, of the Eastern and the Western world, perpetually going and coming across the isthmus, along a main artery of commerce. Besides preaching the gospel there, and giving historical proofs of the resurrection of Christ, he there, too, as at Ephesus, laboured at miracles (2 Cor. xii. 12; cp. ver. 11), evidently

in extraordinary fulness. And there (Acts xviii.), as elsewhere, he met opposition, especially from the Jews. Besides, among the Corinthian converts there sprang up a spirit of partisanship and controversy, in which even (cp. 1 Cor. ix. 1, 2) the apostleship of Paul might be questioned. And one of several good fruits of these controversies, which occasioned so much sorrow for this great apostle, is to show that, at least in Corinth, Christianity did not steal into power while men slept and an enemy could sow tares in the night. Paul's work there was "not done in a corner" (Acts xxvi. 26), and the Corinthians, whether Jews or Gentiles, believers or unbelievers, were perfectly wide-awake, and fully disposed to reason, and question, and dispute, at least as much as was good for them.

At the time of Paul's first writing to them, they had to be powerfully reasoned with about *inferences* from the fact of the resurrection of Christ, now established in the mind as a fundamental of Christianity. But, he reminds them, quite recently, five or six years before, the gospel had come to be established among them. It was by addressing them as *reasonable*, expounding the gospel (1 Cor. ii.), and proving the truth of it (1 Cor. xv. 1-8) by rational evidence, while (2 Cor. xii. 12) Paul himself showed miracles as his "ambassador" credentials. There is no reason to doubt that these Corinthians were as well able to judge in this matter as any community in the world, at that time or at any other time. The reasoning that had to be done was simple and straightforward. The plain strong evidence was there, before their eyes and ears. Any man of sense in Corinth could really judge in such a question of simple fact as—*Was* Christ indeed seen alive after His death? He could judge five hundred and thirteen times, multiplied by sense, better than a "historical critic" who has not heard the witnesses, and whose mind is blinded by domination of atheistic prepossession.

Distinctly, then, from the apostles, who were official propagandists of the new religion, we see a very great fact in the reception of that religion, among Jews and Gentiles, by so many of those to whom it came. All over the world, men who loved the truth more dearly than life, having considered

this religion, heard its doctrine and seen its evidence, gave themselves over to it, risking all their true life, in this and in the eternal world, upon the gospel as the truth of God.

The adherence of that primæval community to Christianity is peculiarly important as evidence of its truth; especially on this account, that the primæval Christians, while they had the best possible opportunity of knowing the facts, were at the same time under the power of the strongest possible motives to labour *to know the truth* of the matter. Their position in this way resembled not simply that of ordinary Christians in our day, who show their faith by their works; but also, and especially, that of Christian men who have written apologetic works in defence of the truth of Christianity. In order to appreciate that peculiar value of the testimony of the primæval Christian community, let us at this point pause for a little to consider that value of an apologetic literature which it has as being, *by the very existence of it*, itself a monumental evidence of the truth of the religion.

The library of books that have been written in defence of Christianity is a thing quite peculiar in the history of the world. There is no other religion in the world's history in defence of which there have been written a library of books like this, by men of various ages and nations, many of whom have been men of the highest ability, with intellect highly trained for the discovery of truth, and mind amply furnished with knowledge of what bears upon the truth of the matter in question. And the simple fact of there being such a library of apologetics of Christianity is important in this respect, that it shows that Christians, qualified to form an intelligent opinion, have carefully studied the question of the truth of this religion, and that *in consequence of real inquiry* they have rested in the conclusion that it is true and divine. They are thus for us like expert scientific men, speaking to a question within the limits of their science, and to a point of which they have made a special study. Apart from the reasons which they may give in support of their opinion, the very fact of *their* being of that opinion is, in the estimation of a judge or jury, itself an important evidence in the case; because their opinion is that of men of skill, the testimony of experts. Now every ordinary Christian in the primæval

community was like an expert in this respect, that he, as compared with the Christians of all following ages, was under the strongest necessity of careful inquiry, and had a special knowledge of the subject, being on the spot at the time, and having means of easily learning the facts upon which the truth of this matter really depends.

There is an anecdote, which we have not means of verifying, of Gilbert West, author of a standard work on *The Resurrection of Christ*. The work is devoted to examination of what will be the subject of our inquiry under the head of "The Primary Testimonies," the original scriptural depositions of testimony to the fact that the Lord is risen. The anecdote is that West began the study of the Gospel narratives of the resurrection under an impression that they are so confused and contradictory that he would find in them a disproof of the Bible religion; but that, in fact, the result of his close study of those testimonies was to convince him of the truth of the history, and make him a believing Christian. It is known that Athenagoras, an Athenian philosopher, was made a Christian in that way; by study of this religion, for the purpose of writing against it, he was led to believe it, so as to write the Apology which has come to us under his name. The circumstance that he was at first opposed to this religion gives a certain addition of value to the evidence, constituted by the fact of his believing it. And that peculiar value—as Origen pointed out—belongs to the conviction of the Christians of the first age; because this religion is one which they had not inherited, but for which they had to forsake their previous opinions, as well as make shipwreck of their worldly hopes in life.

Though the anecdote as to West should not be well-founded, still he certainly was an able, honest man, a scholar with a clear, strong mind, who, after thoroughly searching the evidence to the fact of resurrection, came to the conclusion that the resurrection is a fact, so that Christianity is of God. And that itself, *his coming* to that conclusion in this way of careful inquiry, has the peculiar value of the sworn testimony of an expert witness, or of the well-weighed opinion of a judge. And so, generally, as to the authors of the library of Apologetics. In a Christian country it is not to be expected

that every one who writes in defence of Christianity shall have begun with being an unbeliever. And a man's having previously been a believer, does not show that his present inquiry into the evidence of Christianity is not earnestly sincere; nor that his opinion now arrived at as the result of inquiry, that the truth of Christianity is proved by the evidence, shall not be entitled to rank as the testimony of an expert witness. As a rule, there is no reason whatever for imagining that believing Christians, in writing books on Christian evidence, are not sincerely exercising the best of their judgment on the question, "Is this really a solid proof of the truth of Christianity?" Canon Westcott, when he writes *The Gospel of the Resurrection*, has the same title to credit for sincerely believing what he says as if he had been writing on the basis of Plato's *Phædo*, a philosophical dissertation on the immortality of the soul. Chalmers, a practical reasoner of great power as well as eloquence, no doubt has a certain pleasure in the march and the triumph of his argument, as well as in the success of his cause. But those who have read his *Life* are aware that his work on Christian evidence is not a mere exercise in ecclesiastical or partisan logic and rhetoric, but expresses the profound conviction attained to by a great soul through an agony of searching after God. Isaac Taylor, in his *Restoration of Belief*, is seen by us to be a matured believer with veteran strength of conviction as well as affluence of learning, who has no fresh living memory of wrestlings with doubt. But we feel that every sentence is really the utterance of a judicial intellect, in which a mind of great power is simply judging according to the evidence. So, speaking generally, it would be really silly as well as sinful, stupidly perverse, to imagine that the Apologists, from Justin Martyr downward, have not seriously believed, not only that Christianity is true, but that the truth of it is demonstrated by suitable proof. And the fact of *their* so believing after having carefully considered the matter, so as to be able to write books about it, makes the library of their books to be one great monumental evidence of the truth of the religion which they defend.

But the primitive Christians of the first age, while their testimony had that peculiar value, have this further claim

upon men's respect for their conviction, that the sincerity of it was *tried as by fire*. The *trial* is an element of very great value: "more precious than gold" (1 Pet. i. 7). The books that are written in defence of Christianity represent *the reflecting mind* of the Christian community exercised upon the question of the truth of this religion. If these books had not been written by the authors of them, other men would have written books to the same effect. For the thing which is in the books is in the mind of the community. All over Christendom it is in myriads of clear strong minds that are perhaps not distinctly conscious of thinking about evidences, or that are not energetically active in literary composition. The books would not have found a place in the library of Apologetics if they had not expressed, fairly and well, what is thus in the mind of the community. It is there, in that mind, as a slumbering flame ready to break out into a blaze, as in a burning bush of testimony. But in the case of the primæval believers, that same testimony has the peculiar additional value which gold receives from being tried in the fire.

"The great cloud of witnesses," appearing in the first century, are thus different from everything else in the way of witness-bearing that has appeared even in the history of Christianity. In the first place, they all had to pass away from their old opinions to sacrifice what was dearest to them in their old ways of thinking and feeling and acting. This made it inevitable that they should really and seriously *consider*, as before God and in view of the eternal world, the question as to the truth of this religion. And, in the second place, and especially, *they were on the spot at the time*; the evidence of the voices of the apostles and evangelists and of the miraculous attestation was submitted to the test of their bodily senses: so that that generation of Christians can say in a real sense to all other generations of mankind, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us." Thus there was the testimony, not only of the apostles, but (Acts v. 32) of the community of believers.

It is remarkable, when we use our eyes and spread the matter out with reason, how very complete is the evidence

in that first age with which this rising temple is lighted up as with lamps of God. And, somehow, the holiness of the light of demonstration appears, like an altar flame, to have in itself a power which prevents the vile suggestions of untruth and fraudulency from sickening us with loathing, as when foul harpies light and gloat and fatten on a feast. Christianity itself is seen to have been thus among the heathen "pollutions," as the evidence now is among so-called critics, stainless, bright, resistless, like a sunbeam in a sepulchre.

SEC. 3. *The throned witnesses ; especially Paul.*

In commenting on the threefold cord of John, Peter, and Paul, we noted the unique position of the Apostolic order, clear, distinct in history as the twelve Cæsars, the authorised witnesses of Christ, and the authoritative teachers of His kingdom. That was in connection with their Apostolic testimony regarding His earthly ministry, as going to constitute the Gospel history which has come to us through the four evangelists. We now will consider them in connection with their direct personal action upon mankind in the Apostolic age, in forming the Church of the first century for her career in the world. It is out of the real active life of that ministry of theirs that there arose that heritage of testimony, from the Apostolic age, which has been as water from the smitten rock for all the ages following.

(1.) *The Apostolic order generally.*

We again begin with the closing thirty-three years of the century, after the disappearance of Peter and Paul. Though after their departure other apostles were, no doubt, alive and active, we are acquainted only with the life and activity of John ; so that for us this is the *Johannine* period of the Apostolic age, in which he shines "alone in his glory," as a moon to rule the night. For us the period is like a night thus far, that, excepting the Apocalyptic letters to the Asian Churches, we have no clear light of information^s regarding the state of Christianity in course of it. The period thus resembles the bridge-way in Mirza's vision, which is concealed

from view in mist, while at the two extremities there is light. But if we see a river where it enters a forest, and thereafter see it where it leaves the forest, we are not without knowledge of what has taken place between the entrance and the exit. And we now shall consider what may have been the course of the Church's life in the seeming obscurity of that period.

Polycarp, who suffered martyrdom in A.D. 155, had then, he said, "served Christ eighty and six years." He may thus have been born of Christian parentage in A.D. 69, the date of the ruin of Jerusalem, and fall of its temple. He was a personal follower of the Apostle John; as also may have been Papias, who is placed about A.D. 125, where we saw him expounding the Gospel history, and at knotty points consulting the memories of those who have been followers of the original apostles. We do not happen to have such details about other Apostolic Fathers, Barnabas, Ignatius, and the author of the *Epistle to Diognetus*. But already we begin to see light into the first century from the second. And in corroboration we have the Bithynian Church of Pliny's letter, A.D. 110. Some of those examined by him had *abandoned* the Christian profession more than twenty years before; that is, more than ten years before John's death. The Bithynian martyrs were, no doubt, generally Christians of the first century; and some of them may, in their early prime of life, have been personally acquainted with Peter, or have heard the first reading of his letter to the Bithynian and other Christians when it was brought round by Silas.

We thus are led to think of the Johannine period, the last thirty years of the century, as that of *the formation*, from infancy to thirty years of age, *of that second generation of Christians* who were born members of the Church, where the initial process of planting had been succeeded, though not superseded, by the ulterior process of edification. It is very interesting to think of some one Christian life as thus coming into formation within that period: Polycarp's, for instance, whose first thirty years of life precisely bridges over the space between the fall of Jerusalem and the Apostle John's assumption into the fully manifested life. But now, when

we think of Polycarp as growing up in that period from infancy to completed manhood, we remember that it is not only at the feet of John. Polycarp not only has coevals, who will accompany him into the second century: Pothinus of Lyons, ninety years old in A.D. 177, was thirteen years of age at John's death, and must have been well acquainted with Irenæus, Polycarp's old pupil. In that primæval thirty years, Polycarp had senior contemporaries, who had been personally acquainted with the apostles and evangelists of the early Apostolic Age, the period of Peter and Paul. He, as well as Papias, may have conversed with the daughters of Philip the evangelist. And more distinctly we can connect him in our thought with Clement of Rome, whose (1st) *Letter to the Corinthians* is deemed the earliest of the extant writings of the Apostolic Fathers.

It seems a reasonable tradition that this Roman Clement was that Clement about whom Paul (Phil. iv. 3) spoke so remarkably to his noble Philippians from Rome. If Clement was at that time thirty years of age, then, at John's funeral he, in a still vigorous old age, might have met Polycarp then in full maturity of manhood. What we thus perceive dramatically in their persons has this important general meaning, that the generation which, at the close of the first century, was intrusted with the heritage and the destinies of Christianity, in the world, had been formed under the influence, not only of John, but of that first generation of believers who were brought into the kingdom of God in the Petro-Pauline period of planting the Church. The river of the Church's life which disappears from our view at the fall of Jerusalem, and reappears at the close of the century, did not, when disappearing, freeze into a block of ice to be melted into water again when about to reappear. It has been flowing all the time: the same identical river, though gaining augmentation of its volume from tributaries, while sending some of its fulness away into the sky.

Again, it is not to be supposed that Christians in that last period of the century lost the art of writing, until Clement, Polycarp, and others began to write after John's death such things as happen to have come down to us. In Paul's time, we see in his own person that there was an amount of

literary activity which was warranted by the circumstance, that the effect of it was found important even for the success of that very greatest of apostles (2 Cor. x. 9, 10; 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16; cp. 2 Tit. iv. 13). Whether Matthew, Mark, and Luke may not have written their historical works, or some of them, in the first quiet of this last period, after subsidence of the storm of Neronian persecution, is a question which we need not press. In that last period the Apocalypse enables us to see something of the Church's life, as that of a community greatly exercised about the things of the unseen eternal world, while variously tried and trained by means of things temporal and visible. Faith and life are at high tension. The lowest condition, described "lukewarm," may conceivably be boiling heat in comparison with the spiritual condition of some Churches that are highly thought of in our day. And we observe that the apostle, speaking to the heart of the Churches as from the heart of Christ in heaven, gives a very great place to *the word* of God, a *written word* or *Book*.

Evidently it is the "historical critics" that have been sleeping or day-dreaming. We saw it to be a moral impossibility for the Christians of the second century to perpetrate the shameful fraud of a forged literature for the purpose of disguising a false invented history. We now can see that it must have been a natural impossibility for the Christians of the last period of the first century to sit still, and say nothing, and do nothing, but wait for forgers of a following generation to weave an imaginary activity for them out of the dreameries of imbeciles. And among other things we are not "surprised to learn" that the Apostle John really *did* something—of *book work*—in his *régime* of thirty years; "redeeming the time" of his being a father to all the Churches, and a trusted "guide, philosopher, and friend" to such capable young Christians as Polycarp of Smyrna.

The "historical critics" who disbelieve wish to place the *Apocalypse* before the fall of Jerusalem, in order to make John a false prophet. We, not under influence of that bias, are able to see, in the light of real history coming in upon us, that a production of the Apocalypse which we have here, heart to heart with those Asian Churches, would before the fall of Jerusalem have probably been a natural impossibility.

The *fourth Gospel* is a fact. There unquestionably was a fourth Gospel from the beginning. There has never been any book known in the world that had any real pretension to be a fourth Gospel but the one we have. And there never has been known in the world any man in the least likely to have written this book but the author of *1st John* and the *Apocalypse*, the disciple whom Jesus loved, who leaned upon the bosom of God incarnate, and who *in the fourth Gospel is never once named*. It is true that he has unpardonably sinned against "historical criticism" by very clearly "manifesting" the Godhead of Christ. But the "Son of thunder" does not care about that. And the world is indebted to him for completing the world's wonder of a perfect Gospel history by four evangelists, through his supplementary view of the whole matter; as it most vividly appears to him (cp. *1 John* i. 1-3) looking back, from his heavenly attitude, over the little things of a now passing time, to that great eternal reality (*John* i. 1) which (ver. 14) was manifested seventy years before,—to *one* who "beheld," and was never further than he now is from forgetting *that*.

We mark the activity of Polycarp, in his writing to the Philippians and his journey to Rome; of Clement, in his writing to the Corinthians; and of the correspondent of *Diognetus*, in his *Letter* to that individual. The Ignatian Epistles we do not take into view. And Papias, in his quiet simple pastoral labour, looks like a pathetically beautiful anachronism. The modes of activity which we have marked appear to indicate that the Christians of the first century entered the second—like Cortez and Pizarro—as *campaigners*; capable valiant men, in whom there had been formed a disciplined habit of watchful regard to the mission of Christianity,—conquest and occupation of the world. The beginning of that discipline we see, under the greatest of Christian captains, in the missionary superintendencies of Timothy and Titus, with a strong flexible organisation of Churches under them in charge of elders and of deacons. How far in a campaign so ordered the collection and care of Scriptures, or conference and correspondence with reference to the Apologetic defence of Christianity, may have been attended to as a distinct department of the general admin-

istration in that warfare against evil, does not appear. It is perfectly clear that the whole interest of Christianity was in strong skilful hands, and watched over by skilled eyes not owlishly neglectful.

The Apologetic of that time, as constituted by giving a reason for the hope that was in Christians, was extremely simple. Paul's proof of the great fact of resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 1-8) is not less simple than conclusive for those who heard him within twenty years of the crucifixion, and could easily verify or expose the statement as to witnesses. The required assurance that the gospel doctrine is the real meaning of that wonderful event—or, that the apostles were authorised of God to give the meaning of Christianity—was easily forthcoming, in the shape of apostolic miracle (Rom. xv. 18, 19) to the Gentiles, as well as Old Testament proof adapted specially to the Jews. The apostles did not need to be always working miracles everywhere. At Corinth (2 Cor. xii. 11, 12), or in Ephesus (Acts xix. 10, 11), a great demonstration at one selected time might save much detailed labour at other times and places. Ordinarily it might suffice that the apostles were known to have the *power*. Beyond that, their simple testimony as to matters of fact was no doubt effectual, as it ought to be. It is effectual now. No man who has any sense, whether he be a believer in Christ or not, really doubts a statement as to a matter of fact within their knowledge, by Paul, or Peter, or John. But *that is a compendious apology of Christianity*. All the labour of historical criticism only brings us to the point of that, or fails to bring us to it, or keeps us away from it. And *at the point of that*—as if listening to statements of fact from Peter, Paul, and John—the Christians of the period now in view *were* without any labour of inquiry. Paul and Peter were fresh in memory, and John was alive. And though he, too, had been gone, the Christians of that period really knew all about the apostolic movement that was material in importance, as well as if they had witnessed everything with their own eyes and ears.

But (Matt. xix. 28; Eph. ii. 20) everything rested on the group of apostles. Regarding evangelists, or apostolic men who were not apostles, it is not necessary to make any separate inquiry. They follow in the train of the apostles, as

the "minor" miracles of Gospel history are warranted by the "greater," which at the same time they support. And we will not inquire into deep reasons for the number twelve, as Irenæus reasoned both deep and high about the number four. The number is suggestive of *amplitude*, in relation to the two apostolic offices, of ruling and of witness-bearing.

The number originally, as found in Israel's tribes, disclosed amplitude¹ of *defensive strength*. On every one of the four sides of the tabernacle, where Israel's life was hid with Christ in God, there were three tribes of Israel as an armed guard upon that sacred life. Harold the Saxon was tauntingly asked by Norman William what strong fortress they had in England. He answered, Salisbury Plain; and he explained that its walls were armed men. In the New Jerusalem (Rev. xxi.), the Israel that have entered through the pearly gates are coextensive with humanity; though (Rev. vii.) in the plan of providence there continues to be a recognition of the difference between Jews and Gentiles; a difference which is real, and of some real importance in the campaign of true religion, while (Gal. iii. 19) not entering into the substance of vital relationships of man to God through the first Adam and the last. And the apostolic group of twelve has amplitude in breadth of relationship corresponding to that of the new Israel, which is the true abiding Israel, the whole of elect humanity, ideally present where the tabernacle of God is among men.

Historically, the twelve apostles never were distributed over so many separate tribes, or sections, even of mankind. For an important administrative purpose it was agreed among them (Gal. ii.) that Paul should be owned as having (Acts ix. 15) a special mission to the Gentiles, while Peter, in thus representing the apostolic twelve, should be regarded as in peculiarly close relation to the circumcision. In this there was a natural fitness; as Paul alone was Gentile in his upbringing, the twelve being all home-born Palestinians, and Paul is to the last the only apostle whom we feel to be in touch with our "*modern*" occidentalism. But even he in his actual ministry goes "to the Jew first." And in their actual ministry, as we find in their writings, Peter and John go "also to the Gentiles." The whole Apostolic order preach repentance and remission of sins to all nations, beginning at

Jerusalem. All the apostles belong to every part of the new Israel of humanity, as every spot on the world's face is lighted by the sun, moon, and stars. Practically, every one feels that the amplitude of their number comes home as a satisfying fulness to him individually; so that all the apostles are his even as Christ is not divided.

How far the apostles, for working purposes, had distinct provinces, we do not know. Besides observing that agreement about apostleship of Gentilism and of the circumcision, we note that Paul, for instance (Rom. xv. 20), will not build on another man's foundation. There is no appearance of the labours of separate apostles having overlapped one another. And the early traditions go some length in assigning distinct evangelistic fields of labour to various apostles by name. We may presume that, in fact, there were various local careers. But of any such thing as distinct patriarchates or dioceses for those true princes of the Church, there is no trace. When twelve fishermen go a-fishing on one sea, they avoid one another, so as to have various local careers; but the diocese of every one of them is all the ocean. An Apostle Peter who is a bishop of Rome is a contradiction, like a sun who is a gas-light in the Vatican. But of the detailed relations of the apostles to one another, as of the detailed relation of the whole Apostolic order to evangelistic and other offices, we have not any distinct information.

The official unity of the nascent Christendom was in *the apostolate, the order of apostles*, "all in the whole, and all in every part." For local administrative purposes of the new kingdom once founded, there was a provision in the constitution of the synagogue, found everywhere in the empire, and in a disciplined habit of Church life which the synagogue had formed in those converted Jews, who were a large part of the membership of the primæval Christian community, and became the strong framework of its working organisation. To comprehensive administration of the offices of a whole community by select individuals, the Hebrews had been formed, not only through their national constitution under Moses, but in some measure through their tribal distribution in Egypt. Israel in its "essential form" (*μορφή*) really continued to exist (1 Pet. ii. 1-9) under the new dispensation, with the apostles on twelve

thrones. But when we consider the vast complexity of the problem of bringing within a pure spiritual constitution the weltering chaos of a world which lay in wickedness, and reflect upon the seemingly insurmountable difficulty of dealing with social habits which had become a second nature, while in the meantime there was a civil magistracy or political state that had its own independent rights,—we wonder how it was possible for a few simple men to originate the orderly system of a Christendom which we see historically rising out of that chaos, and rising without appearance of effort, like the Jerusalem temple—

No hammers fell, no ponderous axes rung,
Like some tall palm the mystic fabric sprung.
Majestic silence !

The wonder in our mind is suggestive of wonder in the work we behold. A fair suggestion is, that the rise of Christendom is by creation of the word of God (cp. Heb. xi. 3). And in especial (Eph. iv. 1–13), the vital organising unity, which we see as if incarnated in the Apostolic order, is most reasonably accounted for by supposing (ver. 4) that the “one Spirit” in that whole body was the same Spirit who, in the old creation, bringing order out of waste and vacuity, had brooded upon the face of the deep. For the apostles after all were but the *sound* of a word (the “word” in Heb. xi. 3 is not *logos*, who—John i. 1–3—is almighty, but *rhēma*, as if “a breath”). The energetic, creative “power” (Acts i. 8) was presumably that of the creative Spirit of God. And even the successful outward “administration” through which Christendom arose is presumptive evidence of divine inspiration of the apostles.

But their being “on *thrones*, *judging* the tribes,” represents an *abiding authority*. Authority to bind and loose, as, *e.g.*, in connection with sin (John xx. 23), may have limits in respect of extent, which do not prevent its reality as a fact. In relation to whatever is within those limits, it may be said with truth to parents as it was said to the apostles, “What ye bind on earth is bound in heaven, and what ye loose on earth is loosed in heaven.” That is to say, a parent as such has *authority*, such that his lawful command makes before God a *binding* obligation for his child. What are the *limits*

of that authority, such that a child's obedience to it shall be "in the Lord," is a distinct question to be solved upon appropriate grounds of its own. The vital central thing in the relation is the *fact* of authority. In the apostles there was the authority as a fact; as there is authority in magistrates and in ruling elders. The specific difference of the Apostolic authority was a certain *sovereignty* in judging "Israel." A bishop who claims to be sovereign, as a successor of apostles, really *dethrones the apostles*; and thus is the too zealous woodman (zealous for himself) who cuts down the branch on which he stands. For he makes the sovereignty to be not theirs *alone*. The power of the keys (Matt. xvi. 19) of admitting and excluding, relatively to the "Church" (ver. 18, where the word first occurs), does not bring distinctly into view the specific in Apostolic authority, that which is peculiar to it. For, in the highest sense, forgiveness of sin is competent only to God, so that it is a proof of Godhead in Christ. And in the sense of admitting and excluding relatively to the Church, remission and retention are within the power of ordinary official Church rule. The *sovereign* authority peculiar to apostles in their administration of the supreme will of Christ (Matt. xxviii. 20; cp. Acts ii. 2), is exhibited in their imposing *laws* and *constitutions* on the new kingdom; such as the ordering (1 Cor. xi. 23, etc.) of the Lord's Supper, and (Tit. i. 5) the prescription to ordain elders in every Church. At the Synod of Jerusalem (Acts xv.) the apostles took "the elders and the brethren" into association with them in a decree. And an apostle may be found (1 Cor. vii. 6) intimating that what he now says is by way, not of authoritative prescription, but of recommendation or suggestion. But this is not a disclaimer of authority, but an implicit assertion of it. And the Apostolic style (1 Cor. vii. 17) of almost in the same breath, "so ordain I in all the Churches," is an assumption of authority over the Church's life, such as, under Christ, is competent to the apostles alone.

John was spoken of in the primitive time as bearing on his brow the *πέταλον* (an inscribed plate on the brow) of the priestly mitre. And he no doubt had not only personally the seal of God upon his forehead (Rev. vii. 3, xxii. 4), but

also officially a uniqueness of headship over the whole Church outwardly, like that of the ancient high priest. For when he came to be the last surviving apostle, then in Him alone was contained the apostolate, the whole Apostolic order, with the authority peculiar to it. He thus was a true "universal bishop," the last. When the title was usurped by Leo the Great, "the last of the good popes and the first of the bad popes," the assumption was denounced on behalf of the Eastern Church as flatly antichristian. And the assumption on the part of the apostles of a power of *right to legislate* in the kingdom of God, is another presumptive evidence of their divine inspiration. Here their downright simplicity is very important. For it makes the assumption on their part unmistakably clear in its distinctness. We know them as sincerely simple, truthful, so as to be sure that they would make no assumption that is not founded upon right, nor make a hollow parade of official unreality of grandeur. Paul, in his expository manner of a man who cannot leave anything unexplained, takes pains to show that on his part the assumption of authority is in consequence of revelation to him, of which he is the organ of communication from God to other men. But without explanation we can see that the modest, manly, earnest men, who have come into this rank, would not assume that authority except upon the footing of "what I have received from the Lord, that have I delivered unto you." This, again, is one of the "portable evidences" which are every day sustaining the faith of readers of the Apostolic Scriptures. It is in a sense nearer to us than the great fact of the resurrection of Christ, while it is pervaded with that fact as the atmosphere is filled with sunlight. And in reading the Apostolic Scriptures, no one really doubts that these men are, like the prophets of old, speaking as from God.

The authority which they thus possess as rulers of the Church's life comes into view yet more impressively in relation to her *faith*. For the faith is at the root of the life, and may be said to be the root, the living foundation of it (Hab. ii. 4; Rom. i. 17; Gal. iii. 11; Heb. x. 38). And the apostles clearly act as throned *teachers* of the Church. The manner of their exercise of the *dogmatic authority* is very

peculiar; on account of peculiarity of relationship to the Old Testament and to Christ, as well as to the Church. The Church is no longer in a childish condition, such that she can be fed with milk for babes only. She now has need of the strong meat that is for men. So the apostles do not merely dictate as if teaching a child the alphabet; but *reason* with Christians, going beyond those "beggary elements" in exposition and application of principles delivered in the Old Testament, and now made clear in Christ. There thus comes into view, in their use of the Old Testament, that very peculiar thing which may be described as *authoritative construction* of an *authority*. We see it in the practice of Christ Himself. He in everything conforms to the prescription of the ancient Scripture, and yet in all things proceeds as an *original* authority, speaking straight from God: so that He even *gives* the meaning of the Scripture He expounds, as, *e.g.*, when He throws the "twain" into, "they *twain* shall be one flesh." Apostolic *reasoning* (in proof), another aspect of the paradox, is most fully exhibited in Paul's writings. He labours to show that the doctrine which he maintains is really a doctrine of the Old Testament. He evidently thinks it very important that Christians should clearly see that they thus are built on the foundation of the prophets. But he is not the less resolute in maintaining that there is a true, distinct, independent foundation of the apostles, constituted by *their* speaking with authority of God (Gal. i. 8, 12). And what thus comes out expressly in his manner of explicitness, is really implied in the whole Apostolic teaching. Peter, for instance, in his great *manifesto* (1st Peter), speaks things only which any Christian may see in Christ as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy and type. And yet, apparently without consciousness of asserting any claim, he speaks as an *authority*, whose word is law for the faith of Christians whom it reaches. In order to see this we do not need to look at the preamble (1 Pet. i. 1) of his letter. Through all its unassuming winning kindness and simplicity, as of a shepherd or of a lamb, there appears a *prince* of the Church, whose proper style is, "It seemed good unto the Holy Ghost, and good unto us." He does not "sense" the Scriptures with the arrogant absurdity of those who profess

to succeed him, by putting into the Scripture a meaning which it *has* not — maintaining that without the “sensing,” Scripture is “a nose of wax,” which every one can shape at his discretion. But he *finds* in Scripture a mind which is *his own*; and this mind of his own, he knows to be the mind of God in Christ (cp. 1 Cor. ii. 15–17).

Here, then, we come distinctly into view of “the *signs* of an apostle.” That *petalon*, the plate upon the brow of the high priest, bore as an inscription, “holiness to the Lord.” The petalon inscription of the apostles was (2 Cor. xii. 12), “signs and wonders and mighty works.” The whole Apostolic activity proceeded upon assumption of an *authority* which is nothing less than divine; which if not divine, is nothing but imposture. While it was only through perceiving that authority in the apostles that men could repose real faith on their teaching as a foundation (1 Cor. iii. 8–14); the fact of that authority was proved by miracle. We saw that the reality of miracle working by the apostles was universally believed in by the primæval Church. It really lay at the foundation of her faith in God. For not only Christ was “a man approved of God” by His miracles (Acts ii. 22); “God also bore” *the apostles* “witness” by theirs (Heb. ii. 4). It is in this way that the apostolic foundation was laid in Christ Jesus.

The apostolic miracles, like those of Christ, while proving the doctrine, were proved by the doctrine. No one who is worth reasoning with can doubt the sincerity of the apostles in their profession to work miracles in attestation of their teaching. And the works really can have no other meaning but that the teaching is true and divine. For plainly, so far from being absurd or immoral, it is fitted to establish the kingdom of God among men. The reasonable construction, therefore, of the history, is that in these works, extraordinary and supernatural, there is manifested “the finger of God,” authoritatively pointing the doctrine that “the kingdom of God is,” in this gospel, “come unto you.”

But the apostolic doctrine thus attested was all declaring Christ, and Him crucified (1 Cor. ii. 1; i. 22). Their Epistles give us means of judging what must have been the tenor of the testimony of the apostles regarding Him. We can see that it must have included an account of His coming

to our world (Phil. ii. 6–10), His labouring and suffering there for the redemption of lost men (1 Pet. i. 11, 18–20), and His resurrection into glory as their victorious Redeemer (1 John ii. 2, 3, iii. 2). In the Gospel histories we see what the testimony actually was. It was, and was intended to be, on account of His earthly ministry, as personally known to those whom He chose (Acts x. 41) to be His witnesses. It was in especial a declaration as in personal evidence of the great fact of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. So everything of theirs was done in His “name” (Acts ii. 38, iii. 6, iv. 12, 30). It is His “name” that (Acts ix. 15) Paul was to carry to the Gentiles. If Paul was like a moon, and the apostles like so many stars, Christ, in His glory as risen, was the sun, of whose fulness they all received, and grace for grace. And as every ray of light that sparkles in the dewdrops on the earth is from the heavenly sun, so everything truly Apostolic in action or in speech is a witness-bearing to the fact of the resurrection of Christ.

(2.) *In especial, Paul.*

When West had written his work on the resurrection of Christ, in which he examines the whole body of Scripture testimonies to that fact, Lord Lyttleton suggested to him, that a separate proof of the truth of Christianity might be made out of the case of the Apostle of the Gentiles. The suggestion dwelt in his lordship’s own mind, and set him a-working at the subject, to the effect of his making a fresh contribution to Apologetics, which now is one of the standard minor works on Christian evidences—Lyttleton’s *Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of Saint Paul*. Arnold, too, had special reference to Paul’s case as itself a separate ground of defence of historical Christianity, when he crushed the “mythic theory” with the scornful sentence quoted above (p. 317). The strange event in Paul’s life, which was the making of that life in its true greatness, was not regarded by the two Englishmen as an insolvable historical conundrum, to be thrown aside in order to make way for metaphysical history of inventions. They regarded it as a matter of fact, about which a very honest man has told the simple truth.

With some men it is natural, nay, almost a necessity of

nature, to pursue inquiry into the *way* and *manner* of the Lord's manifestation to Paul. For there are some who seem to have it as a working principle of their nature, that "secret things do *not* belong to the Lord our God," and "that the revealed things are *not* those which belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of His law." But their speculation is apt to thrust itself into the exposition or defence of Christianity, with which it really has nothing to do; and in which the intrusion is a sort of weakly imperious egotism. And as we really do not know the things which are made matters of speculation, the exposition or defence is brought into a cloud-land, where the interest of truth is pretty sure to suffer, as a fog is pretty sure to make some men lose their way. Besides, the mere occupation of the mind with cloudy speculation at critical points affecting the interest of truth is injurious to the cause of truth on account of its distracting the attention; as if an army on the fiery edge of a charge in battle were to be intercepted with a discourse of Berkeley on speculation, to the effect that soldiers are perhaps only shadows.

We, then, with reference to the appearance near Damascus, protest against mere speculation about the way and manner of the occurrence, as distinguished from the historical fact of an actual appearance to Saul of Tarsus; a bright light near Damascus, brighter than the noon-day sun, accompanied with a voice of one who declared himself to be Jesus whom Saul was persecuting; and who thus led him to know that he was thenceforward to be a witness to mankind on behalf of the faith of which he had till then been a persecutor.

Regarding that event, Paul himself is our only witness. His companions had probably but a very confused impression of the outward aspect of what had happened, whose real nature they did not understand. Though the bright light was around them as well as Paul, they appear to have been at some distance from the central brightness by which he was struck helpless and blind to the earth. Though they heard the sound of the voice, they did not catch the articulations of it so as to know what was said; if, indeed, they could have understood what was said, spoken as it was (Acts xxvi. 14) in the Hebrew tongue.

So far as appears, their experience of the occasion may have been somewhat as follows:—Paul was some little way in advance of them. When the bright light enveloped him, outshining the sun, they were only on the border of it: brought to a halt there, with startled wondering gaze toward the awful central brightness. There, while hearing sounds, they may have seen nothing clearly, until the splendour passed away, and they went forward to Paul in the helplessness of his blindness; in which condition he was led away into the city. That is their first and last appearance in history. There is no trace of them having been inquired after and examined by the historian of the Acts. And it is clear enough that in any case they could have had nothing to tell him affecting our inquiry. Our inquiry regarding the truth of Christianity is affected only by the substantive matter of fact, which is narrated by the historian evidently from the information of Paul, and is narrated by Paul himself in two speeches recorded by the historian.

Regarding the question of fact, *there never was any doubt in the mind of Paul himself*. That is to say, the only man who really knows anything about the matter never had any doubt of the historical reality of that appearance to him of the Christ who had been crucified some years before. Some who really know nothing about the matter, are of opinion that Paul only imagined or fancied an appearance of that Jesus who may naturally have been much in his thoughts, now presented so vividly to his imagination, that he took the imagination for a reality. That never was Paul's own opinion. He was at the time on a journey, in charge of an important expedition, in the very middle of the day. He was in the full possession of his faculties so as to carry on a conversation, which he retained distinctly in his memory; so distinctly, that long afterwards in telling the story to a Hebrew (King Agrippa), there came back to him the recollected Hebrew sound of his own name (*Saoul, Saoul*). And if his ears could deceive him, at least his eyes could not. The *three days' blindness* was not the result of imagination; even though it had not, as some think, been followed by a life-long weakness of the eyes (cp. Gal. iv. 13; cp. ver. 15). At all events, it was not the imagination of the persecutor that made Christian Ananias come

to this fiercely raging enemy with a kindly Christian, "Brother Saul, receive thy sight." But, in fact, it is not likely that Paul went through any such exercise of making himself sure that it was not all a dream. He knew perfectly well how to distinguish day-dreaming from reality (cp. 2 Cor. xii. 1-10). And about the historical reality of this event he does not appear to have ever had any doubt, more than he had of his own existence.

No one can refuse to own that this event at least marks the *date* of a new movement, which has powerfully influenced the whole history of Christianity and of civilisation. It was the occasion of the beginning of the Christian career of Paul, the career which has been the greatest influence in that history of all human lives, but that of Him whom Paul had been persecuting. And it was a distinct career that thus began. Paulinism was distinctly a new beginning of Christianity, so that Paul was in a real sense a second founder of Christendom. He maintained that there is and can be only one foundation. But he knew that there might be various founders laying that foundation or building upon it, each in his own way. And he had a way distinctively his own which has left its mark.

In connection with that new beginning, we have the advantage, in our inquiry as to the truth of Bible religion, of being able to look at the whole matter in a fresh light, as it appears at full length in the person of him who, from this time onward more and more, is to the Church and to the world the leading representative of Christianity. In this earlier period it is a real privilege to study the religion in connection with such individualities, at once engaging and heroic, as that of Peter and Paul. If Peter be the most human of humankind, Paul is surely the manliest of men. And his distinctive manliness, as of an Ironside, is at the present point of special interest for us, because we find ourselves coming to be in a sense dependent on his downright sincerity and truth.

Peter at one time denied the truth, and at another time "dissembled" it. Nevertheless we find ourselves reposing perfect confidence in his veracity. It is not likely that any reader of the New Testament ever really doubts the truth of a statement made by an apostle about a matter of fact,

and it is hardly conceivable that any one—who is not an “historical critic”—should be such a knave in grain as to doubt the truth of a statement about a matter of fact by Paul. There is no trace of his ever having, at any part of his career, put on a false face, or said what he did not seriously believe. In the Christian period of his life he expresses deep compunction for having been a blasphemer, a persecutor, a despiser (1 Tim. i. 13). But he does not admit that he was at any time untruthful, insincere. This for him is a matter of vital interest. He knows (1 Cor. ix. 27) that a man’s being an apostle in his office will not necessarily save him from being a castaway in his person. And the statement which he makes about that past is, that he obtained mercy, *because* he did it ignorantly in unbelief; a statement which appears to admit the construction, that for *him* to have been dishonest, insincere, not acting out of regard to what he believed to be truth and duty, would have involved the guilt of the unpardonable sin. The strength of his feeling in relation to this point may be understood if we remember (Acts xxvi. 10), that if he had not sincerely believed that Christianity was a false religion, he must before God have been guilty of the crime of murder of the innocent. It may thus have been a great relief to him, in all his after life, to be able to remember, that in his deadly persecuting rage he was sincere. But we need no assurance of his sincerity. What appears in his history is, that he was always true to his convictions, and had unshrinkingly the courage of his opinions. And what appears through all the multitudinous self-revelations of his letters is, that he was naturally incapable of insincerity; a soldierly man, like a steel sword, so simple, frank, and brave, that his mind was never visited by the shadow of a thought of dissembling about anything.

Barnabas is the “good man” of the New Testament. (His Old Testament analogue is Ahimaaz, who ran so fast and far to shield the *father’s* heart by being beforehand with the good news of a national victory to the *king*.) Barnabas finds that goodness will not suffice at Antioch; and he brings from Tarsus a capable soldier for disciplining the confused new life into order. But Barnabas will afterwards find it is a soldier he has to deal with (Acts xv. 35–39) when he would

fain, upon a new evangelistic mission, take along with him that Mark who had previously shrunk and turned back from a difficulty. Paul, going to war, will not have pewter by his side, but only steel. So he sends Mark away from him, though at the cost of parting from Barnabas the good. Now it is this man of steel, so simply frank and brave, so resolute, unswerving in sincerity, whom a "historical" criticism has made to be *the* arch-impostor; who invented a new gospel in the place of Christ's; and ensnared and deluded the original apostles into apostatising from their original faith; and carried away all Christendom into the apostasy; and went on to his dying day most solemnly declaring, in the name of God, that this innovation of his was the true original gospel which had from the outset been delivered by the apostles from the Lord! Some "theories" might have for motto the tomb-stone inscription—"As soon as we are born we begin to die."

Where did the critics make that wonderful discovery? According to them, the only genuine utterances of Paul himself now extant are in those four unquestionable Epistles. According to them, consequently, *these Epistles contain the only certain information that we have about him*; for the Acts, too, are a forgery, not disclosing the truth, but concealing it. We saw that those four Epistles prove that the Pauline narration in Acts is correct; that in point of fact Paul's gospel is what the original apostles had taught as from Christ. But now the question is as to the personal character of Paul. The critics know nothing about that character; they avowedly and ostentatiously have no means of information about him, excepting from Romans, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, and Galatians. *Is it from these four Epistles* that they have come to know him as a consummate impostor, liar, false witness in God's name regarding the Christ whom he professes to serve in the gospel? No! it is from an atheistic philosophy, which surely is a Laputan philosophy, teaching how to bring sunbeams out of cucumbers.

It may thus appear that Paul, too, has (cp. John ix. 39, 40) come for judgment into the world in order that the seeing may be blind, as well as that the blind may see. And those who knew him, if they heard the criticism of the "blind" upon his Epistles which they reject, might receive it, as John

Knox went from Queen Mary's vehement scolding "with a reasonable merry countenance." Cooper in one of his Indian tales has an erudite enthusiast, who is about to be burned alive by the Redskins, but is saved from that peril by their discovering he is insane. His insanity is disclosed to them through his seizing the opportunity at the stake of proclaiming, as to meet audience, the crowning discovery of his life of learned labour; namely, that the American Indians are the lost tribes of Israel. What puts his insanity beyond a doubt, so that even a "Stoic of the woods" is moved into laughter, is his imagining that they are *lost*. They! who can make their way blindfold through forests and over mountains, with instinct as unerring as an eagle's eye;—to speak of *their* being "*lost*!" We have seen in what manner an ordinarily well-informed private Christian in Bithynia would be likely, in the early part of the second century, to receive a forged 1st Peter. We *cannot* conceive how the primitive Christians, who had no sense of humour, might receive a spectacled professor from the Europe of the nineteenth century, prelecting upon the "forged" Pauline Epistles; Epistles of a Paul who is known to him only from those four Epistles. But one thing we are certain of—namely, that a critic who makes Paul to have been a deceiver, preaching a new gospel of his own instead of the original gospel of Christ and His apostles, would by those primitive Christians have been regarded as a "blind" man, and a deaf as well as crazy, who never once has seen the face of Paul, nor heard his voice.

About a certain bishop, John Knox said in his trenchant way, that he was blind of one eye in the body, and of "*baith* in ye soul." The criticism now in question really sees *no* Paul, but only dreams an incoherent impossibility. Instead of Paul the apostle, let us look at the Paul of "historical" criticism. The Paul of criticism *believed* that near Damascus he had conversed with the glorified Christ. He was (of course) mistaken in the belief. But *in fact* he believed that the Son of God had appeared to him, and had taken him into the favour and service of the Most High, and indirectly charged him to be an apostle of Him whom he had been persecuting. Accordingly, what does this Paul of criticism do? He gives his whole life with passionate enthusiasm and

amazing success to *preaching down* the true religion of Christ; for the purpose of fraudulently introducing a new religion of his own in the place of it, and seducing the followers of Christ into apostasy from the faith of their Master; bidding men put another person's works at the foundation, where Christ prescribed that they should put their own, and at the same time bidding them worship a creature in place of God. We need not dwell upon the circumstance, that in all this representation a very honest, honourable godly man is an infamous impostor, throughout his life persisting in the daring impiety of bearing false witness, in the name of heaven, to the effect that this new invention of his own is the true original gospel of Christ. That, of course, is a moral impossibility, a monstrous incoherence which, even in a fictitious character, would be condemned as an outrage upon the mere possibilities of dramatic representation. What we observe at the present point is, that the character is a *natural* impossibility, even in a most villanous impostor. No creature would, nor could, by a belief in the glorified Christ, be impelled to labour with all his might for subversion of the religion which Christ had founded by His teaching and in His blood. The criticism here, in the very heart of it, is simply "blind." Its very dream is mere chaotic incoherence of impossibility.

Thus, when we try to imagine *why* Paul should so labour on behalf of a false Paulinism, we find ourselves more and more at a loss; plunging at every step into deeper and deeper hopelessness of mere impossibility. For instance, he is a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, with a religion of self-sufficient pride, vainglorious confidence in one's own works of the law. In that religion of *self* he has made high attainments, and achieved a great reputation among those of his own nation and of his own sect. But this new religion of his invention cuts down that whole fabric of his life, destroys it from the foundation, burns it to ashes, sweeps it away in a hurricane. Now he has humbly to confess that in him there dwelleth no good thing; that all his righteousnesses are as filthy rags; that he is a guilty creature, deserving only the wrath of God, so that in the righteous judgment of heaven's law he is a dead man. Truly, the Paul of criticism

is "crucified with Christ." But he dies there as the *impenitent* thief: *impenitent*, not believing in Christ, but rejecting the true original gospel of Christ, and putting a new invention of his own in the place of it. Excepting Christ on Calvary, perhaps the one who in reality has most profoundly felt the agony of the Cross, drinking the bitterness of it, the pain of the shame, is Saul in that vision near Damascus: especially if it be the Saul of this historical criticism. He loses all that he honoured and loved and trusted in upon earth or in heaven; and is thrown wholly upon what he blasphemed and persecuted and, loathing, despised. Rejecting life, he embraces death; and to that foul death he has to cling all through his career. But he does cling to it with a passion of devoted affection into which there goes all the power of a giant force of nature every hour! And why? for nothing, but a delusion which kills the deepest love in a Pharisee's heart, an undying worm tormenting it, a quenchless fire consuming it! If any man can believe that, what is the use of his gift of reason?

It is said that men, to whom religion has become a sort of habit and a career when it has utterly died in their hearts, as it must have died in the heart of the Paul of criticism, may still continue in a course of outward religionism, under the power of ambition, that "last infirmity of noble minds." They may thus, according to the prescription of Loyola, be as "corpses," at the bidding of the religious order they belong to, perhaps hoping to rise to the head of it. The ambition is in them in the place of life, as the witch-ghosts of Lucan's Pharsalia were in the corpses of the slain. They have sold themselves to Satan for the bribe of "All the kingdoms of this world will I give thee: for they are mine." But here, again, it is impossible for us to comprehend the Paul of criticism. What career of ambition is there here for *him*? He abandons the order he belongs to. He makes himself an outcast, not only from the sect of the Pharisees, but from the nation of the Jews. And he joins a community whose communion involves infamy of outlawry from mankind; a sect which is everywhere spoken against; who, following an "accursed" one, are as offscourings of the earth. He thus abandons a really promising career of ambition, in which

he, though young, has already risen high, and may hope to rise much higher; and suddenly plunges himself into that hopeless bog, degradation. Then, with reference to the hopeless degradation itself, we may suppose that the ruling passion yet is strong in him, as it was in the demon of pride who said, "Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven." But how does the Paul of criticism propose to himself to achieve a dominion so forlorn? It has to be through his in some way gaining influence among the Christians, establishing himself in their confidence and affections. Now the one thing to which they are devotedly attached is the religion of Christ. And this Paul, in order to gain their confidence, sets himself, with all his might, *to destroy that religion!* Truly it may be said of the unbelieving criticism which believes in *him*, "Great is thy faith! I have not found so great faith: no, not in Israel."

But here, further, the Paul of criticism has to multiply himself by twelve, and work twelve "great" miracles of new creation, turning apostles into apostates. And the miracle of their strangely sudden abandonment of Christianity in favour of the Pauline imposture, is all the more wonderful on this account, that *they* can gain nothing by it, even for a carnal ambition; but must lose what they have had, as throned in this new Israel. We know that they have ambition in their nature. It wrangled among them even on the last journey, in the advancing shadow of the Cross: the sons of Zebedee scheming privily for the highest places in the kingdom, and the others with open bitterness resenting the pretension. That carnality has been subdued by grace. But now, if they give way to the gracelessness of apostasy from Christ into Pauline imposture, the old spirit will come back seven times worse than before. And for what? What gratification is there now to be for their ambition? They are all to be dethroned in favour of Paul. He is to be the sun; and they are to be only the moon and the eleven stars, to do obeisance to his greatness; while Christ has to disappear from the firmament, excepting as a dishonoured *name*, which is to be retained as a disguise of the apostasy. "He must increase, but I must decrease," said John the Baptist, in a self-effacement of magnanimous greatness that had not been

excelled among the prophets. But the one whom *he* thus preferred to himself in honour was the Christ of God. The Paul whom the twelve apostles of Christ are to accept as a master, denies the Christ who has sent them to the world, and puts a false Christ in the place of Him, so making them to be false prophets. "We have heard strange things to-day," may well have said the disciples in the school of this criticism. And especially the "*Paul*" must be to them a (*τέρας*, miracle) terrible monster, a Frankenstein fiend, destroying those who have called him into being, with hard sayings, which they that are feeble and unstable wrest unto their own destruction.

Having so far brought the historical Paul into line with the other apostles, we perceive that the mere impossibility which in his case appears at full length in a strong light, really existed in the case of all of them. Passing away from the absurdity of supposing that "the twelve" apostatised from Christianity to Paulinism, and that the Christian world went with them into the imposture,—practising *upon itself*! as if our existing Christendom had in one generation gone over to Mormonism or Mohammedanism under the impression of its being Christianity,—we now look back beyond the Pauline movement, to that which took place in the life of the original apostles, along with the "brethren" who believed in Christ.

They all underwent that crucifixion with Christ which afterwards was undergone by Paul. The commonalty of the apostles, for example, the four fishermen first called to this office (Luke v. 1–11), literally "forsook all" in order to follow Christ. To thriving young men who have a business of their own in their native place, it is a very great sacrifice to throw it all to the winds in order to follow one who has nothing, not even a home, such as the foxes and the air birds have, and who can promise them nothing belonging to this world but labours and "persecutions" (Mark x. 30). The one of the twelve who had a higher social standing had to throw himself out of his own class and associate with what was reckoned the "dregs" of the people; making himself a *pariah* of his society, while casting away the comforts and the distinctions of his wealth. Now when Christ, instead of being

a homeless Galilean peasant, is exalted on heaven's throne, with the civilised nations worshipping Him (Rev. xi. 15), how many professing Christians of our acquaintance, gentlemen of standing like Matthew, would make the sacrifice which Matthew made in leaving his receipt of custom to be a follower of Jesus of Nazareth, devoting his life to the study and the propagation of his new religion of sacrifice? And beyond all that, deep as life itself, with a pain like that of dying, all of them had to abandon *the religion* which was most honoured in their "holy nation," and embrace what was infamous in the estimation of the wise and prudent, the religion of this outcast who "suffered without the gate." And *the reward*, the only reward, as they knew from His forewarnings and saw in His experience, that they had to expect in this world was the worst evils which this world could inflict; so that even the violent infamous death, whose gory face and thorny crown were (2 Cor. iv. 10) ever in their view, might be to them a welcome release from the evils of their condition in this life. *What moved them*, except their seeing, "by many infallible proofs," that Christ was risen from the dead, and believing "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God?" No one has ever told.

The kind of evidence upon which *they* believed this, we shall consider in our next section of "the Primary Testimonies." But now, still with a leading regard to specialties in the case of Paul, we will again turn our attention to the appearance of the risen Christ to him on his way to Damascus.

Lyttleton does not look at that event in isolation. He contemplates it in connection with the whole career which followed from it. And it has to be so regarded by us, if we will really see it as it is in history. Paul's experience of that appearance was not an isolated startling thing, like a lightning flash and thunderclap. It was a sunrise of the light which filled thenceforward the whole of his life's day. It was the outbreking from a smitten rock (1 Cor. x. 4) of a stream which followed him through all his life's career. And what we have to consider as inquiring historically, is that event in its connection with his Christian life, and with his great career of Christian apostleship. This career we again recall to mind is probably the most important for the world,

relatively to that which is of real importance to mankind, that the world has ever seen since Christ died on the Cross. And in the appearance near Damascus we have to see, as if proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb, the first beginning of the great illustrious career of Paul's apostleship.

In Paul's case it is not necessary to distinguish between the Christian and the apostle. There is in him always a perfect "aefauld" singleness: his faith as a sinful man, dependent on the mercy of God in Christ, is just the same faith, in the same simple humbleness which receives grace and apostleship; including the special grace (Phil. i. 29) of being permitted not only to preach the gospel, but also to suffer for it. Especially since we have already considered the testimony of primæval Christians in their personal believing, we will now, in Paul's case, restrict our attention to his apostleship, and the testimony which was borne by him in that official capacity. Here is one of the authorised witnesses: how came *he* to believe this gospel on behalf of which he appears? Paul knew quite well about the evidences, both of natural and of revealed religion; and could speak of them, seriously believing in them, to Jews and to Gentiles, among Greeks and barbarians, variously, according to various occasions (Acts xiv., xvii.; Rom. i. 18—ii. 15; 1 Cor. xv. 1—8). He also, in laying the foundations of Christianity, was careful, not only to work miracles in attestation of his own apostleship, but also to lay before men the full testimony of the twelve apostles and of the community of believers which had been deliberately provided for in the plan of Christ. And in connection with that array of witnesses he (1 Cor. xv. 8) put his own experience only very humbly in the last place. But, on the other hand, he evidently thought his own peculiar experience of great importance as accounting for his own personal Christianity, and as warranting and necessitating his peculiar action as an individual apostle. And his peculiar experience he always traced back as to its fountain or sunrise in that appearance near Damascus.

That appearance is thrice recorded in the history of the Acts of the Apostles. First, it is solemnly described at length in the history (Acts ix. 1—22), as if it had been one of the

very greatest events in the rising of the new kingdom of God among men. And then it is twice narrated by the Apostle of the Gentiles, in the only two apologetic speeches of his which are recorded on the two great occasions of the culmination into crisis of his public life:—his address to the Hebrew nation at Jerusalem (Acts xxii. 4–16); and his address to the Roman empire in the person of governor Festus and of King Agrippa at Cæsarea (Acts xxvi. 9–20); the reason obviously being that he regards that incident in his personal biography as not only an apology for himself, justifying him in his public action and career, but also and especially an apology for his religion, a sufficient reason why the men whom he is addressing should believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Then when we look into those Epistles of his which are owned as unquestionable by unbelievers who have knowledge, we find that that appearance at Damascus continues to exercise a decisively commanding influence on the whole career of his apostleship. Thus, as a general fact appearing variously, we perceive that he reckons it important to have a place and standing for himself as an apostle distinct from the body of the original apostles. In point of fact he *is* distinct from them, though of them, as the tribe of Levi is from Israel, or as the family of Aaron is from the Levitical tribe. And the distinctness is clearly recognised by the original apostles: not only (Gal. ii.) in connection with the circumcision controversy for convenience of a passing exigency, but permanently as an abiding normal condition of things, so even in the ideal representation of the Apocalypse:—the number of apostles is only twelve, as also is the number of the Israel of the New Jerusalem and of the pearly gates. Paul and Paulinism are left out of the representation. They are a distinct thing. And Paul not only recognised this as a fact in the permanent relation of himself and his work to the great movement; accepting the division of the work between them and him; and (1 Cor. xv. 5–8) speaking of them as “the twelve,” and of himself as a distinct thing. He reckons this desirable. He looks upon the *distinctness* of Paulinism from the older movement as an important interest of Christianity. And that distinctness is, in his estimation, not only marked but

secured by the ever memorable appearance to him on his way to Damascus.

The importance of the distinctness came into a clear, strong light in the circumcision controversy. That controversy, besides having in it a danger of legalism to the true life even of the Hebrew Christians, had in it a special peril to the comfort and to the Christian liberty of the Gentiles. And it then was found a real advantage to the Christian cause that Paul was not simply one of thirteen apostles, but one by himself, distinct from the twelve, as being in a special manner by ordination of Christ the Apostle of the Gentiles. That gave him, so to speak, a "brief" in their great cause, a special title and call to be the advocate of their interest and guardian of their freedom. But, somewhat later, the importance of his position in its distinctness came into view in connection with the very foundation of the life of Christendom, the ground of a man's justification unto life, of a sinner's pardon and acceptance with God. We have not means of knowing how the other apostles were placed or disposed in relation to that matter. We do not know even whether any of them was so situated as to be able to exercise the kind and amount of influence that was required in the crisis. We do know that, in the order of second causes, the life of Christendom was saved, in a most formidable crisis, by a great man's coming forward and undertaking this cause alone, though it should be against the world, against all the Churches, against every creature in the universe, arming himself with the lightnings and the thunders of the curse of God:—Paul said, "If I, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel than that which has been preached unto you, let him be anathema" (Gal. i. 8).

So the tide was turned—the tide of a fast-ebbing life—into a full-flowing life. But the influence of that great action of the great-souled apostle could not have been such as it was in effect, if it had not been for that distinctness of this apostle from the others; as one who occupied a separate, independent position of his own, by virtue of which he was not only entitled, but bound to take such action in such a case. It was well for Christendom that he was not a merely thirteenth apostle, but, as it were, a new independent aposto-

late in his own person. Effectively, and as a teaching force, Paul with his associates probably constituted in visible aspect a much more imposing apostolate than that of the twelve. But the true spiritual *exousia* (power of might springing out of right) could not be, in a nascent Christendom, unless it appeared that Christ had given "this authority" to Paul. And that could appear only from what had happened near Damascus.

Under the influence of this view, Paul is found laying emphasis on the *immediateness* of his dependence on Christ. Immediateness of *personal* dependence on Christ appears to have remarkably characterised his personal experience of religion. This is the more remarkable in his case in that he was in everything so much given to reasoning. We might have expected to find his personal religion of that logical cast, which, so to speak, accepting Christ as a first principle, reasons itself into details of life of thought and action. But Paul, ever logical, is not only vehemently emotional, but vividly intuitional. He *lives* Christ, breathes Him, has Him as the light in his eyes, the life-blood in his soul. And as in Luther's case so in Paul's, that experience of continuous personal dependence on Christ alone (*sola solo*, says faith) was a spiritual equipment of the theologian for saving the Christian world from the legalism and blighting bondage of Pharisaic "Churchianity."

But Luther to a similar effect remembered his "doctor's vow." He regarded it as placing him under obligation to seek the truth straight from God, as an original pioneer explorer, an individually trusted guide of the community. And Paul had a profound sense of there being such an effect upon the character of his *official* position, of responsibility and right, through the immediateness of his official dependence on ordination and operation of Christ. Thus, in the supreme crisis of the peril of the Christian world, when he had to stand forth solitary like Luther at Worms,—“Here I am, none other thing can I, God help me,”—he took that ground with his first word (Gal. i. 1), introducing himself to those who very well knew him as “an apostle, *not of man*, neither *by man*, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead.” Here there is no call, nor room, for “apostolical succession.” *It is excluded* (“by what law?”) by

the immediateness of the dependency of this apostleship of Paul upon the personal action of the risen Son of God. So, correspondingly to the challenging trumpet-blast of this opening, he proceeds through the battle of the Church's life of faith in God through Christ. As this is a question of gospel doctrine, there must be a clear understanding of the ground on which a question of gospel doctrine has to be disposed of;—the authority, the rule of faith. And for Paul the authority, the rule of faith, is God in Christ, *immediately* communicating the truth to Paul as an apostle (vers. 11, 12): "But I certify unto you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me was not after man. For I neither received it from man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Here, again, strikingly, the *immediateness* is evinced by the exclusion even of the instrumentality of human teachers. Not only he has received his gospel from the sole authority of Christ; he has received it, without the intervention even of an Ananias, straight from Christ Himself. And he goes on (ver. 15, etc.) to show that not only he in fact has never been a theological pupil of the original apostles, but it is plainly a physical impossibility that he should have been; providentially he was sent to a wholly different school (ver. 17), where Moses and Elias had been.

That utterance to the *Galatians* will clear the air of Christendom; and a Paul does not need to strike the nail often on the head. But at this period of his labours, even where the stroke is not needed, the mental attitude and action seem to be maintained habitually, and as if unconsciously. Thus to the *Romans*, in a very curious manner, he brings to view that *immediateness* of his apostolic dependence on effectual authorisation of Christ alone (Rom. xv. 18, 19). *He makes Christ personally to work miracles in attestation of Paul.* The real presence of Christ (Matt. xxviii. 20) in all apostolic labour, of bringing the Gentiles into obedience, must have been a familiar thought to every apostle (cp. Acts xviii. 10). And perhaps it would have been natural for an apostle, as an ambassador of Christ, in matters of *doctrine* to see himself as receiving instructions immediately *from Christ* (1 Cor. xi. 23) the only Prophet and King. But "the signs of an apostle," the miraculous attestations of his teaching, are (Heb. ii. 4)

the peculiarly appropriate work of *the Holy Ghost*. So, in fact, Paul speaks of them (Rom. xv. 19) to the Romans in that very statement as to his credentials. It consequently is all the more remarkable that he begins with making *his* miracles to be the personal work of Christ Himself (ver. 18): "For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which *Christ* hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, through mighty signs," etc.

We thus have a side view of the species of apostolic consciousness which pervaded the evangelistic labour of Paul in all that wonderful campaign of his, in which, from Jerusalem all round to Illyricum, he went battling for the kingdom, with preaching and with miracles, made mighty of God for the overthrowing of heathen strongholds. We can see why a man so modest should be always magnifying his office. It is said that David Hume, hearing John Brown of Haddington, said, "That old man preaches as if Jesus Christ were beside him in the pulpit." This in Paul's case was no figure of speech. When he approached a heathen stronghold with the gospel summons, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and the King of Glory shall come in," he saw the real presence of Christ as a fact, and in himself saw only the organ of Christ (2 Cor. ii. 14-16). To the apostle in his work as well as to the believer in his heart it was an experience abiding as the sunshine—"I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live: yet not I live, but Christ, He liveth in me; and the life which now I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God."

And the rising of that sun was in the appearance near Damascus. All through his ministry there is on his part a vital continuity of reference to *that sunrise* as the true beginning of life to him in apostleship as well as in personal faith. He seems as if to his feeling unreality of that appearance near Damascus would make his whole apostolic labour to be unreal; as a stream is found to be unreal through the discovery that its fountain is only a painted fountain. We may see a parallel in his reasoning upon the great fact of the resurrection of Christ. That, he reasons, is the abiding condition of life in the Church, as the sun is the natural life of the world; so that without a risen Christ there is utter

“disenchantment,” as on waking from a dream—all *past* life of faith has been foundationless, and the preaching has been an empty sound. Such is the relation of vital dependence in which he seems to place his own whole career of apostleship, with all its mighty labours and glorious successes, to that one view of Christ which he obtained on his way to Damascus.

This comes out further in his dealing with the *Corinthians*. When he was founding their Christianity, he, of course, preached the gospel of Christ (1 Cor. i. 22–ii. 1). He also (2 Cor. xii. 12) showed them very copiously “the signs of an apostle,” in attestation of his authority to teach as from God. And, moreover (1 Cor. xv. 1–8), he laid before them a regular proof, by array of competent witnesses, of the grand fact of Christ’s resurrection from the dead. But even at that time (ver. 8) he placed *himself* before them as one who had the fundamental qualification for apostleship, in that he was one of those who had “*seen*” Christ alive after His death. And now (1 Cor. ix. 1) his abiding vivid consciousness of *this* fact of his having *seen* Christ, *so that* he has that qualification, breaks out incidentally, so as to show—“his speech bewrayeth him”—the settled inward habit of his mind. He is recommending what is not obligatory in Christian law as a thing to which a believer may nevertheless bind himself in Christian charity. His own example in this respect he wishes to make as effective as possible. He therefore appeals to the fact of *his* being an *apostle*. That is to say, he is entitled to the widest freedom in such matters that can be lawful to a man; and consequently, imitation of him in this matter is not a thing incompatible with utmost rights of true freedom in any Christian. So he says, in his perfervid manner, “Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? *Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?* If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you; for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.”

Here we see that in Paul’s mind the connection of the after life with the first “espousals” (Jer. ii. 2) is not merely one of sacred feeling or sentiment. It is in reality one of fact and law. *The being of His apostleship depends on the historical reality of that appearance.* For (1) it is only on

occasion of that appearance that he can have attained to the fundamental *qualification* for apostleship, namely, having *seen* the risen Christ. Probably (2 Cor. v. 16) Paul had never seen Christ before His resurrection. In any case, an apostle could not be an authorised witness of the resurrection who had not actually *seen* Christ alive after His death of the Cross. One found not to have seen him, while claiming to have been an apostle, would have been *eo ipso* detected as a spurious heir, a Pope Joan. The twelve, to whom collectively the risen Christ had gone on showing Himself during the forty days, did not need to care about a separate proof of every one of them having been admitted to the view of Him. But if Paul be not distinctly known to have seen Christ near Damascus, there will be no certainty of his being an apostle. (2) His *ordination*, his actual appointment to apostleship, his commission, his investiture with office, came to him there and then, and only there and then. The other apostles were known as elect during the period of their training and probation in the earthly ministry of Christ. Their ordination and investiture, with qualification for office, took place very solemnly during the forty days to the knowledge of the whole brotherhood of disciples. Paul was "separate" in his ordination, as otherwise. Excepting at the Damascus appearance it could have had no existence in fact. It is only then and there that he *can* have received the grace of apostleship, from "the Apostle" (Heb. iii. 1) who alone can confer that grace upon a creature. Hence on his part a profoundly vital feeling of relationship of that original Damascus transaction to his whole career, and all that is dependent on that career.

Paul's reasoning in 1 Cor. ix. 1 is from *the success* of his labour at Corinth to *the reality* of that appearance near Damascus. "*The seal of mine apostleship are ye.*" Their Christianity is the proof of his being God's apostle. *And so* it is clear that he saw Christ Jesus our Lord on that occasion near Damascus. For it is only in that way, through a real historical transaction of his calling and qualification and ordination by Christ, then and there, that Paul *can* have come to be, what the success of Corinth showed him to be (1 Cor. i. 1; cp. 2 Cor. i. 1), veritably "called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God."

Of the historical reality of that appearance, the proof is the statement of a supremely honest able man, the only man who knows anything about the matter, who knew perfectly what took place; and the corroboration which itself is visible demonstration, constituted by his whole Christian and apostolic career, making a Paulinism, which is a vast beneficent abiding influence in Christendom and civilisation of the world. If it be asked, on the other hand, what real historical reason is there for doubting the reality of an event so attested, the true answer is—*None whatever*. A number of men, without a shadow of a particle of historical evidence to stand upon, take it upon them to maintain that the thing *cannot* have taken place; *because* an atheistic metaphysic says, that in history there shall be only an absolute continuity, exclusive of all true beginning. We know that atheistic metaphysic says this. Thousands of years ago it was known to the heathen Chinese, as well as to Paul's heathen hearers "of the Stoics and of the Epicureans." But *that is no reason* to those who believe in a free sovereign personality of God, or in a free agency of man; those who believe in such a thing as *will* having place and power anywhere in the universe. It is mere bewilderment about the possibility of motion.

We have dwelt on the Damascus appearance as a detail which brings vividly into view what really pervades that history as a whole. That history remains: *littera scripta manet*. Though the "Acts" had been unwritten, the things of that new creation are in the life of mankind, bearing witness to this religion through all generations. Though Christianity had disappeared from the world at the close of the first century, the memory of it would have remained, like the memory of Pompeii and Herculaneum, with the question—Whence that baptism? Of man only? or of God? Though all Christendom now should openly apostatise from Christ, the testimony of the apostles remains, addressing itself to every human being, as the sunshine would remain though all nations were struck blind. We have considered Paul's case fully, because (Acts ix. 15) that is the case in which the thing meant by apostleship is exhibited at full length. But the same thing in substance was involved in the career, in the apostolic being, of every one of the twelve. They

all, though dead, speak to us from their thrones beyond the stars. They all are foundations of testimony, sustaining the lofty walls of New Jerusalem, and calling us to enter through the pearly gates that we may hide our life with Christ in God.

But Paul's case, besides, has a distinct historical foundation of its own. It has a grand coherency, so that Paulinism is "all in the whole and all in every part." Historically, that great career is more solidly distinct than that of Julius Cæsar. And there is no real possibility of accounting for it except upon the view that "God was in Christ." Such is the nature of the argument from Paul's apostleship. His individual testimony to the appearance of Christ alive after His death, falls to be considered along with the other "primary testimonies" (in the following section, 4).

SEC. 4. *The Primary Testimonies (Gospel history of the resurrection).*

Some unbelieving critics have found the Scripture accounts of the resurrection of Christ to be so confused and contradictory as to be a disproof of Christianity. Scholars like West and Ebrard find in the accounts a harmony which is internal evidence of truth. We are persuaded that there is not any discrepancy, but a harmony really wonderful; and we propose now to examine carefully the scriptural accounts of primary testimonies, evidence furnished by men professing to have seen Christ alive after His death.

The main source of this evidence is in the *history of the forty days* which is given in the four Gospels, and is supplemented in Acts i. 1-12 and 1 Cor. xv. 1-8. The section in 1 Cor. is *the oldest written account* of the resurrection; and the *vidimus* of evidence there (A.D. 60) shows what had been laid before the Corinthians five or six years before (A.D. 54)—within twenty years of the great event. The Damascus appearance to Paul is there brought into his array of testimonies; but it was outside of the forty days, and in various ways calls for a separate study.

Within the generation of those who had procured the judicial murder of Jesus of Nazareth by false witness, there

was published, in what Renan thinks the most important book ever given to the world, Matthew's Gospel (xxviii. 11-15; cp. xxvii. 62-66), an account of an attempt of theirs to stifle the evidence of resurrection which had come to their knowledge. The result of that attempt was a contribution of indirect evidence of the fact which they strove to conceal. Hush-money is confession of concealment. And the story which they paid the soldiers to tell would not have been believed among the Jews, if among the Jews there had not been a wish which was father to the thought. Roman sentinels do not all go to sleep together at their watch-post, under a discipline which to the Philippian gaoler is more terrible than death. A sleeping man does not see in the dark so clearly as to be able to recognise persons from a distance with whom he probably has no personal acquaintance. The soldiers who slept with one eye open are paid for having seen what did not take place. It is true that the seal of the priestly faction was broken, as well as the emperor's guard. But the disciples were not all thieves like Judas. Galilean fishermen are not subtle in the finest arts of burglary. These were simple, honest men. And we perceive that the matter has to be accounted for in another manner, into which the chief priests and their counsellors know that they dare not inquire.

There also is a further question, *What became of the body of Jesus*, if it be not now shining on heaven's throne? If the chief priests and their counsellors had lived somewhat later, they might have obtained some help to an answer in the doctrines of certain infidels pretending to be Christian. Some of these held that the body of Christ was not real, but only a phantom; so that His death, and His resurrection too, must have been similarly phantastic or unreal. But nowa days even Renan admits that there was in Jesus a reality of manhood. And indeed the priestly faction had shut themselves out of a *docetic* resurrection by sealing the door of the sepulchre upon that body which had been taken from the Cross (cp. Mark xv. 44, 45). The reality of His body and of His death had been previously demonstrated by the soldier's spear. And a strangely pathetic incidental proof is offered (cp. Ps. lxix. 20), in the form of expert medical opinion, to

the effect that before the last outrage by the soldiers the Son of man had literally *died of a broken heart* (see medical note by Sir James Simpson in Appendix to Hanna's *Last Day of the Lord's Passion*). The soldiers, indeed (John xix. 30), had no thought of fulfilling ancient silent prophecy regarding the Lamb of God (ver. 36). They only desired a practical proof of what they had seen to be the fact,—“they saw that He was dead already.” The suggestion of an evasion of death by Christ on the Cross and in the grave, is intellectually more manifestly suicidal than even Renan's suggestion of a mock resurrection of Lazarus. But such outrages on human reason ought to be noted, both as illustrating truth and reality by contrast, and as constituting a commentary on the crucifixion of Him who was “set for a sign that should be spoken against, that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed.”

On the solid ground of history, between the baptism of Jesus and the day of Pentecost we have traced Him to His death of the Cross on Calvary, after He has predicted that He shall rise again on the third day. Within the forty days after His death, *something* must have taken place that produced an abiding belief in His resurrection, so powerful as to bring in a new life among mankind. The Germanic vegetation of the British isles is a proof that Britain, now separated from the Continent by sea, must have at one time been connected with it by continuous dry land. If we leave the wide expanse of German Ocean and come to the narrowness of the Straits of Dover, where the distance appears to be but a step, still there is the gulf, the “gap,” the break of absolute continuity. And when we come to the crucifixion, there is for us between it and the day of Pentecost a gulf profound. From the dark hour in which the disciples all forsook Him and fled, to that birthday of Christendom and modern civilisation, in which, with nothing but the dishonoured “name” of the crucified, and all the world against them, they cheerfully entered on that campaign for the conquest of the world, which has been so wonderfully successful, *something* must have occurred. What was it? If not the stealthy abduction of a dead body, or an evasion of death on the Cross and in the grave, then what?

(1.) *He was seen alive after the crucifixion on at least ten distinct occasions.*

In his account of the forty days in Acts i. 1, 2, Luke says that Jesus before His ascension gave "commandments" to the apostles, having "showed Himself after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." The Revised Version, in changing "infallible proofs" into "proofs," has injured the faithfulness of translation. The Greek *τεκμήρια* means, not simply "proofs," but (Liddell and Scott *in verbo*)—the plural of—"a *sure* sign or token," especially when used as a *proof*, "a proof from *sure signs* or *tokens*, a *demonstrative proof*, opposed to the fallible *σημείον*" (the italics are L. and S.'s). We are made thus to think of such a proof as showing the *pierced hands* or *the wounded side*, or, *conversing with them* in the familiarity (Acts x. 41) of intercourse at the table. The historian, in selecting the strong word *τεκμήρια*, which in our version is rightly rendered "infallible proofs," appears to lay emphasis, not simply on the multitude or frequency of the proofs, but on their quality of unmistakable clearness or irresistible force; so that Jesus is represented as having *many times demonstrated His personal identity beyond possibility of mistake*.

The word *ὀπτανόμενος*, which in our version is rendered "being seen," is in the Revised Version unduly weakened by the translation "appearing." It is a "frequentative" verb. It conveys the idea of the Lord's having, during the forty days, been *in the habit* of showing Himself, or *continued* to show Himself, or *gone on* showing Himself, placing Himself *in the way of* being seen, so as to be identified through those "infallible proofs," "many" times placed within observation of the senses of the apostles. Luke, whether as physician or as scholar, has a certain firm precision in his use of descriptive terms; and in the present case he has not accidentally stumbled upon *τεκμήριον* and *ὀπτανόμενος*. The appearances recorded are only a few selected samples.

Ebrard (in his masterly *Kritik of Gospel History*¹) holds that Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene alone, and that

¹ Engl. Transl. T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh.

Matthew, speaking about Christ's having appeared to "women," does not necessarily mean that there were several *individuals*, but only that there was (first) an appearance to *the female* disciples, though it should have been only in the person of one of them. Matthew's especial purpose in his account of the resurrection is, to set it rightly, as *a great event in the history of the "kingdom of heaven."* For that purpose he has to take some notice of *woman's part*, or *the women's part*, in the early morning transactions of the resurrection day. But to him there is no special occasion for particularising at that point. We will assume that Ebrard's view of the matter is correct. The number of distinct recorded appearances is thus reduced to ten.

It is in the three which took place *on the day* of the resurrection that the process of *proving the fact* of the resurrection, as well as that of coming to *recognition* of the risen Christ, may best be studied. The purpose of the three being to establish the fact of His resurrection in the mind of His disciples, we see the place and use of the "infallible proofs;" and we can understand that the great central appearance was that to the eleven (or ten in absence of Thomas). Earlier on that day, in the afternoon, was the appearance on the way to *Emmaus*. Earliest of all, was that to Mary Magdalene. The general outline here is clear, coherent. But there is obscurity on some of the detailed points in the background. (1) As to *the angels*. Luke (xxiv. 5) speaks of *two* angels; Mark (xvi. 5), only of one. It is possible that on one occasion there might be two distinct *angelophanies*,—two angels "coming upon" the women when they enter the sepulchre, and one angel sitting, as a young man, at the right side of it, after an angel had been seen by the soldiers, need not detain us, except to note, for use farther on, that those beings appear to have a power of making themselves visible and invisible *by an act of will*. The circumstance that "discrepancies," affecting the credit of the history, have been found here by some critics, may help us in taking the measure of their capacity. (2) There is the obscurity as to the appearance *to the women*. That He was first seen by Magdalene is beyond doubt; and the appearance to her is made impressively memorable by the wonderfully beauti-

ful picture of her interview with Christ, which John (xx.) gives in supplement to the synoptical accounts. But whether there were other women with her at that interview, or whether there was another appearance to women, is not clear. We have accepted Ebrard's view as given above.

(2.) *All the appearances were, of Christ in the body, to the bodily senses.*

The only one of these in regard to which this statement could conceivably be subject of debate is the appearance to Paul near Damascus. The historical reality of this manifestation of the risen Christ has been already examined and proved (sec. 3). While the *supernaturalism* of the Damascus appearance might occasion Paul's once employing (Acts xxvi. 9) one of the words for "vision" to describe it, the descriptions of the event in Acts (ix., xxii., xxvi.), and Paul's twice making himself to be one of those who *saw* the risen Christ (1 Cor. xv. 8, ix. 1), place the appearance completely out of the category of *mere impression in a man's own mind*. The serious prosaic circumstantialia of historical descriptions in the Acts, along with Paul's after applications of the history, will bear no construction that does not make the Damascus appearance a great and vitally important historical fact.

But supposing the historical reality, it is a question whether Paul actually *saw the body* of the glorified Christ. It is to be remembered that while in the case of the forty days' witnesses *recognition* of Jesus was important for *identification* of the person, in Paul's case (cf. 2 Cor. v. 16) recognition might be a natural impossibility, as he probably was not acquainted with the bodily aspect which Christ had presented during His ministry on earth; and we may assume that there was no such thing in the Damascus appearance as production of "infallible proofs"—*e.g.* the scars of the Cross. What the history seems to show is, that Paul's assurance of its being Jesus was derived from the words of Christ, "I am Jesus," etc. The words of one who had never been heard before could, along with the miracle of the appearance, assure Paul of the identity of the person.

Thus Moses was made to *know* who was speaking to Him from the bush; and (cp. 2 Pet. i. 16–18) the three disciples in like manner had assurance in the voice from the excellent glory. We do not know, and can hardly dare to conceive, what sort of aspect Christ will present when “every eye shall see Him.” The Damascus appearance to the eye may have been of a splendour like that which Moses saw in the bush. This appears to have been the aspect (*sun-like*) in the Transfiguration, and that presented to John (Rev. i. 17) when he fell at His feet as dead. And even the three disciples, when they were familiar with His lowly aspect, appear to have seen in His Transfiguration aspect only that overwhelming splendour (Matt. xvii. 3). The effect upon Paul was as upon John. What the history represents him as *seeing* is that which blinded him. All that is required in 1 Cor. xv. 8 is, that Paul should have *seen the person*. So as to 1 Cor. ix. 1. As to bodily perception of the body, so as, *e.g.*, to note *the features*, the Scriptures are silent. What may be *involved* in really seeing and hearing the person, we will not inquire. Our purpose of inquiry is satisfied with Paul’s perception of *the person* of incarnate God in a distinct historical reality of appearance.

Paul’s array of witnesses in 1 Cor. xv. 4–8 makes not simply a *chain* of testimonies whose values fall to be *added* together, but a system of circumstantial evidence, “pencil of light-rays,” whose convergence on one point may make a demonstration whose total value is “infinity” (that is, certainty), though the separate values should be small. When the lines of evidence are independent, their *convergence* may make two or three, though in isolation they should be worth little more than nothing, to be in force of demonstration equal to “infinity.” When an American bee-hunter has observed one bee-line, he is far from knowing the point where the honey which he seeks is stored; for that one line extends through all infinite space. But when he has found two or three lines which converge, their point of convergence he knows for a *certainty* to be the point where the desired treasure is; and “infinity” in such a case is the value of that certainty: it is daylight. Now, if Paul’s testimony

be one line of evidence, that of the twelve is another, and that of the five hundred is a third.

(3.) *That kind of evidence is in this case most conclusive in its nature.*

The Apostle Peter, in order to show that the original apostolical declaration was historical, not mythical, appealed (2 Pet. i. 16-18) simply to the fact that the things declared had been perceived by the witnesses with eyes and ears. John, too (1 John iii. 1, 3), places the matter historically upon the foundation of "that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." And Paul, in the great crisis of his writing 1st Corinthians, carefully places the matter so (1 Cor. xv. 4-8) that historically it shall be seen to rest upon the evidence of the human bodily senses. He makes it to be seen resting *only* on the testimony of those senses. The Corinthians are in peril through some doctrine of the resurrection which made the resurrection of Christians to be an event already past, as no doubt their *spiritual* resurrection was (Col. iii. 1; John v. 28). That doctrine implied that the resurrection of the body is not a reality. And unreality of bodily resurrection would imply that the resurrection of Christ is not a fact. But (1 Cor. iii. 8-14) if that be not a fact, then the sun is gone out of the system of Christian life as well as knowledge, and that is simply ruin. Before Christ came, men could live by star-light: "the law and the prophets prophesied until John." But Christ has extinguished the stars. And there is no light of life unless it be in that sun *as risen*; there is no foundation:—if Christ be not glorified in the body He is not justified in the spirit (1 Cor. xv. 9, etc.). Such is Paul's reasoning as to the vital importance of the bodily resurrection of Christ, from which we perceive the vital importance of the witnesses in 1 Cor. xv. 4-8.

We know that in this Paul "reasoned well" — very differently from that reasoning of Plato in which Brutus found rest (that is, *Shakespeare's* Brutus). Without belief in the reality of the resurrection of Christ, Christianity could not live. Some forms of it might linger on earth for a time;

but the tree would be dead in its heart, and kept from falling only by parasitical connections without life. Paul, in the great crisis of that peril (1 Cor. xv.), takes the Corinthians to the root of the matter. He shows them that what is threatened is not only dissolution of this house, but, so to speak, disintegration and evaporation of the very stones of it (cf. Isa. li. 1). He does not now (cp. Gal. i. 8) stand upon his apostolic authority; nor does he (cp. Acts xvii. 3) appeal to the law and to the prophets. *Ventum est ad triarios.* The matter has to be *reasoned* from the first foundation. So he adduces an array of witnesses to *the fact* of that resurrection as a fact, known to them personally through their bodily senses, in that they "*saw*" Christ alive after His death.

No such testimony is adduced by him to prove (1 Cor. xv. 3) "that Christ died for our sins." To that fact, human testimony would be incompetent. For it is not a thing that can be "seen" by men. The purpose and effect of the dying of the Lord Jesus are dependent on pure will of God (John x. 15). Reconciliation of God to man is not cognisable by the bodily senses. No creatures saw the Golden Sceptre touching him to whom Christ said, "Thy sins be forgiven," as men saw him rise, take up his bed, and walk. And now the great Act of Oblivion, "Your sins and iniquities I will remember no more," does not come with observation of the people to cleanse the conscience from dead works.

Hence the vital importance of the apostolic miracles, credentials of the ambassadors, attesting them as "the servants of the Most High God, who show unto us the way of salvation." We learn *from them* the *reason* why Christ died. But the resurrection of Christ is in its nature a sensible fact. It admits of being shown to eyes and ears and hands "by many infallible proofs." The witnessing senses in such a case are not dependent upon miracles or apostleship. The eyes and ears of an ordinary man are as good as if he had been a high priest or an archangel. So Paul now presents himself (ver. 8) in the witness-box, not as a throned apostle, but simply as a man by whom the risen Christ was "*seen*." The twelve are called in by him, not as they now are after their receiving the Holy Ghost with the attestation of "signs and wonders and mighty works," but

simply as they were during the forty days when the risen Christ was "*seen*" by them. And the survivors of those more than five hundred persons by whom He was seen at once, simple believers without any official distinction, now are placed between him and the twelve, the common man on a level with the very "chiefest of the apostles." For in the present case a man is important simply and solely because the risen Christ was "*seen*" by him. The question to be determined has reference to a matter of fact which is to be proved by the evidence of sensible perception (cp. Luke i. 2 ; 1 John i. 3) of sane honest men, who have eyes and ears and hands (1 John i. 1 ; Luke xxiv.).

It is to be noted that (1 Cor. xv. 1, 2) Paul is not now employing this reasoning for the first time. He is *reminding* the Corinthians of what he set before them at the first foundation of Christianity among them. Both to them (1 Cor. iii. 8-14) and to the Romans (cp. Rom. xv. 20), and in effect to the Galatians (Gal. ii. 15-20), he lays bare the original foundation. At the foundation time Paul worked miracles (2 Cor. xii. 12) among the Corinthians. He *preached* Christ crucified (1 Cor. ii. 1), expounding and applying the great atonement (2 Cor. v. 16-21). But he now reminds them that in establishing the foundation fact, the resurrection of Christ, he laid before them *the evidence* of that array of competent human witnesses to the fact. This was only some five or six years before his present time of writing; and *it was only some twenty years after the death of Christ*. The great event of resurrection was thus but as of yesterday. James was slain with the sword of Herod, but probably all the other apostles were alive. And a majority of the five hundred were alive, who had "seen" Christ risen from the dead; this proportion of survivors is found consistent with the average durations of human life ascertained by life insurance companies for their business purposes. The thing had thus to the Corinthians been made as clear as day by superabundant fulness of competent evidence as to matter of fact observed by the eyes and ears of men,—all of whom bore the witness at the peril of their lives. And the matter thus once made clear to them remains clear for us, in that same light of history, on that same solid ground of it. History

places us at Corinth in A.D. 60, recalling to mind what we saw and heard there in A.D. 54. To us at the present hour Paul offers that testimony of the twelve, of the five hundred, and of himself last of all. And whether we do or do not believe and live, the fact remains for us, established historically, that Christ is risen; in that He was "*seen*" by the twelve, and by the five hundred, and by Paul. The sun is there in our firmament though it should only show that we are blind (John ix. 39-41).

The view that eye-witness, as constituting proof of historical reality of the fact, is of essential importance in the foundation of Christianity, is not an idiosyncrasy of Paul nor of Paulinism. The view is expressed in a singularly powerful manner by the "spiritual" apostle (1 John i. 1-3), where we might have least expected an utterance of seeming externalism. John the Divine places the trustworthiness of His testimony on the ground, not of His miracles nor of His inspiration, but of the trustworthiness of the bodily senses of men: "*that which we have seen and heard* declare we unto you, *that* ye also may have fellowship with us." We have observed what emphasis was laid on the evidence of eyes and ears (2 Pet. i. 16-18); and we remember that in fact that evidence of the bodily senses had been cited by the Apostle Peter (Acts ii. and x.) and by the apostles generally (Acts ii. 21, 22), at the first foundation of Christianity in belief. Their inspiration was to them as a miraculous memory, enabling them to declare with perfect accuracy what they once had seen and heard; and the miracles were proof that *they* were distinctively the authorised witnesses regarding the fact of the resurrection of Christ. But *the thing* which made their testimony, the constitutive essence of it in its real original substance, was what had come to them through their bodily senses in personal intercourse with Christ.

We dwell upon this observation, that that *external evidence*, which in the last result is seen to be simply the evidence of the bodily senses, lies at the foundation of Christianity as placed through apostles in the human soul; because there is a tendency to depreciate the evidence on account of its externality, as if externality had involved unfitness for the new dispensation of the Spirit. The tendency would be repressed

if it were duly considered that (what we may call) the innocent carnality (Heb. ix. 10) of the old dispensation—its “milk” for babes (cp. 1 Pet. ii. 1–5)—was by dictation of that Spirit who now speaks through the apostles, previously speaking through the prophets (*διὰ τῶν προφητῶν λάλησαν*). And now we find the apostles themselves—Peter, Paul, and John—all making the externalism of evidence to be fundamentally vital in New Testament Christianity; and in effect insisting that the externality of the evidence is the constitutive essence of its fundamental vitality of importance for the human soul. This comes out most vividly in the relative utterances of that “spiritual” apostle who leaned upon the bosom of God incarnate, and whose life in time seems to have had in it most of heaven on earth.

The *distinctive testimony of John* to the fact that Christianity in the soul is founded on the evidence of the bodily senses, is borne both in his “spiritual Gospel” and in that Epistle which would have been recognised as his by the mark of its being an Epistle which no other man could have written. At the close of his Gospel (John xx. 30, 31), before the postscript, he has the solemn declaration: “These” (cp. John xiv. 26) “are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; and that believing ye might have life in His name.” And at the opening of his Epistle he gives us to know *what* are the things which form the matter of a communication so momentous for the true life of mankind; namely, the “things which we have seen and heard.” But his full description of those things (1 John i. 1–3) ought to be deliberately pondered by us in their bearing on the very point now under consideration. As if his intention had been to come forward with the latest dying breath of apostleship on earth, in support of the protestation (2 Pet. i. 16) “we did not follow cunningly devised fables,” John says, “That which was from the beginning, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have gazed upon, *and our hands have handled*, of the word of life,” etc. Here we perceive a reproduction, precisely, of *the history of the decisive appearance* of the risen Christ to the disciples in Jerusalem, as recorded in John’s Gospel. (1) “What we have seen with our eyes;”—John xx. 20: “Then the same day

at evening . . . came Jesus and stood in the midst." (2) "What we have gazed upon;"—John xx. 20: "He showed unto them His hands and His side." 3. *And our hands have handled*;—John xx. 27: "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." No doubt the statement in the Epistle becomes generalised in meaning. But on that account it is the more significant for our present purpose. For it shows that the strangely, and in some respects awfully, impressive climax of that decisive appearance of the risen Christ is to be regarded as a typical illustration of the essential nature of the process of Apostolic instruction, with a view to men's believing in God through Christ. And what we see in it is the soul being led, *through the bodily senses, into contact* with God incarnate; the man receiving, through his eyes and ears, and even *feeling and testing with his hands*, that eternal "Word which was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth;" so that "we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father."

The word for "handling" in 1 John i. 1 (*ψηλαφάω*) occurs in only three other places of the New Testament. It literally means, not simply *manipulation*, but *palpation, groping* for, as if *testing* by a blind man's feeling; like blind Isaac "handling" the hairy hands of Jacob (see Acts xvii. 27; Heb. xii. 18).

The deep impression which that particular thing made on the mind and heart of John, appears from *his giving* the narrative of *doubting Thomas's presumption and rebuke*, which was not in the synoptic Gospels. His case was only a vivid manifestation of what in this crisis really had place in the hearts of all the disciples to whom the Lord had showed Himself (cp. Luke xxiv. 25; Mark xvi. 10, 14). Even in the case of Peter and John who ran to the sepulchre when they heard the statement of Mary Magdalene, we see a ground for the reproach, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe." They found the sepulchre indeed empty, and orderly, as if to show there had been no robber violence. And then John "*saw and believed*." Like Thomas (ver. 29), he could believe if he saw. Why has John this need of an external evidence? Because in him, also, there is that

"slowness of heart" which was rebuked on the way to Emmaus. For he goes on to say, "for as yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead." The prophecies were a Samson's riddle to them, till they saw the solution "with their eyes" (1 John i. 1). *The belief in resurrection did not fairly settle into their minds* (cp. Luke xxiv. 41) *until the fact was set before them, and pressed and thrust upon them, in palpable reality, through their bodily senses.* The crowning illustration of *that* was in the coarse irreverent daring of Thomas's demand for proof. But the blinding carnality which he thus evinced was operative in them all. And John, in generalising his action into "*our hands have handled,*" is, so to speak,—pleading guilty,—acknowledging his own complicity in that unfeeling, hard irreverence.

This particular in the history has a peculiar Apologetic value, as a crowning illustration of the general fact that the evidence of the bodily senses is that through which the soul is to be led into realisation and recognition of incarnate God in Christ. The earthquake, the soldiers' flight, the women's repeated visit to the grave, the manifestation to them of angels and of Christ, the hurried coming and going between Jerusalem and the sepulchre, the distinct appearances of Christ, first, to the two on the way to Emmaus, and then to the eleven on two successive Lord's days, all have led on toward *this climax*; which marks the central point on which the eye of the last survivor of the apostolic band is now fixed, as he looks back over two generations of men to that most wondrous eight days. In this opening of his Epistle we seem to see two connected things rushing in upon his recollection simultaneously, and struggling together for priority of utterance. (1) There is that amazing thing, *the life* which was manifested; that *eternal* life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us; which *was* in the beginning, and is in *the Word* of life. But (2) there is the amazingness of *the manner of the manifestation* of that life to us. It was *to and through our bodily senses*; so that we have actually seen, our eyes have gazed upon it, *our very hands have handled it!* No doubt the apostle's own soul is deeply moved by the recollection, as if looking (Zech. xii. 10) upon one whom he has pierced. But the plain avowed purpose

which he has in going back to *that especial point* of "the beginning," in demonstration of the truth of Christianity, for the salvation of lost men by faith:—"that ye also may have fellowship with us," whose distinctive "fellowship is with God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

The point of all this is represented by the saying, "seeing is believing." Though Thomas pressed that point with an irreverence which approached impiety, yet Christ, the Creator and Redeemer of man's reason, recognised the point as real. And He gave the kind of evidence demanded, while rebuking the carnality of the spirit of the demand in that case. It was not as if a "scientific" personage had publicly challenged God to give proof "at the bar of science" of His title to be honoured as the Hearer of prayer. Thomas was not insulting God in Christ. His soul was darkly groping (ψηλαφάω) after light, with a mind, apparently commonplace, prosaic in its quality, now perplexed, bewildered, nonplussed, and perhaps half-crazed with despairing sorrow of bereaved love. He obtained mercy, for that he did it ignorantly in unbelief (1 Tim. i. 13). And now, as in Paul's case, the forgiven offence is the abiding occasion of our more clearly seeing the God-given way of man's life in divine redeeming mercy. It is true that they are blessed who believe without having seen. But it is true also, and it is "the present truth," that in a real sense "seeing is believing;" the spiritual faith in God which receives the blessing, historically reposes on the evidence of the bodily senses of trustworthy human witnesses.

The "innocent carnality" of the ancient ceremonial proceeded upon the fact that in its constitution the soul of man is made for attaining to realisation of things unseen through the perceptions of his bodily sense: Eye-gate and Ear-gate are the ways of entering the City of Mansoul. And in the New Dispensation a certain amount of sensible symbolism is retained,—sparingly, as that "milk" which is for "babes" is not suitable for the staple diet of grown men. But the austere masculine simplicity of the new dispensation of the Spirit brings more clearly into view, as in the teaching of the miracles of Christ, the fact that in the very heart of the process of the self-revelation of God to man, a vital fundamental is "*manifestation*" (John ii. 11; ep. i. 14) of His

glory through what is apprehended in the first instance by the bodily senses. The wonder of incarnation of God has this purpose and effect, that He whom (John i. 18) "no man hath ever seen" should now be effectively declared by "the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father," not vaguely, through His being in the world as an omnipresent Spirit, but distinctly, through His being "manifested in the flesh" as that Son of David who (Rom. i. 4) is "declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead." And that is what was seen by this last surviving witness of these self-manifestations of this risen Lord, when looking back upon them from the border of the eternal world. In order that we may partake with Him in that life into whose fulness He is on the wing for departure, He would have us to see in testimony of these appearances of Christ after His resurrection, "that which was from the beginning, what *we* have *seen* with our eyes, what we have gazed at, yea, what our hands have handled of the word of life."

(4.) *The detailed aspects of the history are in keeping with the substantive fact alleged.*

Again we begin at a distance,—with *Paul*. We observed in him a certain pre-Christian completeness of mental discipline and theological knowledge, such that it was not necessary for him, in order to qualification for apostolic teaching, to go through that schooling which the rustic Galileans had to receive in their personal attendance upon Christ. It sufficed that his mouth should be hallowed by contact of fire from the altar; that the body of Old Testament lore which he possessed "from his forefathers" should receive a soul through baptismal regeneration of the Holy Ghost. If only demonstration were made to him that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, then, with Moses thus unveiled to his view, he was a ready-equipped apostle of that unveiled Moses. From the moment in which, near Damascus, the crucified Christ, now glorified, was seen by him, he was "a new creature," in whom "old things were passed away, and all things were made new."

He needed but one clear view of the risen Christ, like that *look* which Peter saw in the high priest's hall of trial. And

in the actual appearance of the risen Christ to him we see nothing beyond that *one look*, nothing of manifestation beyond what was necessary for the one decisive effect of conversion. Correspondingly, it may be noted, Paul is distinctively the *reasoning* apostle, who gives least of intuitions, and draws everything from the Old Testament, and says to himself first of all, "*Prove* all things, hold fast that which is good."

The narrative of the *series of His appearances* during the forty days is in keeping with what is suggested by Luke's general description (Acts i. 3, 4), that the risen Christ "gave commandments" to the apostles; and that as he went on "showing Himself to them by many infallible proofs," He "spoke of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." The general suggestion here is, that while they waited for the "power" (*δύναμις*, ver. 8) to be sent to them from on high, He on earth was giving them authoritative instructions to prepare them for the great campaign which was about to be begun by them through that "power" in His name. But specially, there is an appearance of His having deliberately regulated and attested His self-manifestations to them, with a view to the establishment in their mind of a full abiding conviction, both of His resurrection and of *His personal identity*, as the Jesus who was crucified. Correspondingly, the detailed appearances regarded in their connection as a series, present the aspect of a *disciplinary* course of self-manifestations for that purpose on His part, adjusted to the varying conditions of their minds in the course of those six weeks. He too, like the angels, appears to have had a power of (cp. Mark xvi. 12) making His bodily presence visible and invisible at pleasure, which adds to the appropriateness of the word used by Luke, *ὀπτανόμενος*. Leaving out of view the "incidental" appearances to Peter and to James, and the ascension appearance on Olivet when the whole purpose was accomplished, and considering with care the six remaining appearances of which we have details,—the four at Jerusalem and the two in Galilee,—we seem to see a distinct progression in His training of His followers into that state of mind in which He meant to leave them. And in particular, if not in especial, we see it as an intended effect of that training, to leave His own personal identity, as the one "who liveth

and was dead," clear and distinct in their minds as a fact of which there is to be no more possibility of doubt than there is of doubting as to the brightness of the sun.

Between the first and the last of those disciplinary appearances—the one to *Mary Magdalene* in the garden and the one to *the seven disciples* on the shore in Galilee—there seems to come about a considerable change in respect of a certain *reserve* or distance, if not even *repulsion* in His aspect at the first, giving place at the last to a picture of winning familiar graciousness in the bearing of the Chief Shepherd to His "friends" whom He honours by trusting their affection toward His person with the care of His flock. John's representation of the interview with Mary has kept all following generations even wondering at its glorious grace. And yet in the bearing of Christ there is a something of coolness or seeming hardness, if not even sternness, which at first sight is not what we might have expected in His responding to the rapture of her cry. And so as to His dealing in the afternoon with the two who walked towards Emmaus, and in the evening with the apostles.

As for *the two walking to Emmaus* (Luke xxiv. 13–35). Surely, excepting the "visage" that was "marred more than any man," there never was a deeper sadness on a good man's face than He saw in theirs (ver. 17) when He drew near to them. They may have been unable to sit still under the great sorrow, and have wandered out in desperation, perhaps unwilling to lay their piercing burden upon others with complaints. Though for some purpose He at last (ver. 31) enables them to be aware who it is that has been talking with them while their hearts were burning (ver. 32), yet (ver. 16) He makes the disclosure only at the last. And even at the last it is in a manner strangely cold. He does not so much as tell them it is He, but leaves them to feel their own way to the fact. He does not even say a word of farewell when He is leaving them, but *is gone*. So in His Jerusalem appearances to *the apostles*, first, in the evening of that first Christian Sabbath, and then on that day week. There still we mark an absence of that gracious winning familiarity of which He had given such illustrations not many days before to those whom He called, not His servants,

but His "friends" (John xiii. 1-14, 15). Even when He is in the midst of them His bearing has in it a certain air of mysterious abstraction, an isolation of seemingly unapproachable grandeur, as if He were accosting them from across the border of the invisible border of another world, or from a judgment throne.

When we consider *His dealing with Mary Magdalene* distinctly (John xx. 11-18), we perceive that the distance or reserve on His part is not the result simply of a natural necessity, such as might have arisen out of the new strange conditions. He said, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, to my God and your God" (ver. 17). If He keep her at a distance, it is clearly of His own free will for a definite purpose in His view. And though the purpose should be friendly for the future, yet now the face of it appears wanting in the tenderness of the fellow-feeling of the Son of man. But we come to understand the seeming cloud upon that morning sunshine when we consider the *disciplinary* purpose of the appearances. The relationship was now passing into a new abiding condition. It was necessary to establish a right understanding of it from the outset. And we may suppose that it was not without consideration of wise love that the first appearance was made to Mary Magdalene, so that the discipline began with her: to whom it may not have been without a sweetness in its pain, of friendship that is faithful in its wounding.

She appears (Matt. xxviii.; cp. John xx. 13) to have had a peculiar feeling of need of *nearness* to Christ. The terrors of the condition (Luke viii. 2) out of which He had taken her as a brand out of the fire, may have left upon her life a shadow of uneasiness haunting her from the past. Her condition of mind and heart may thus have come to be one of habitual timid apprehensiveness, feeling never safe in absence of a sense of His supporting presence, as a timorous child in the dark is comforted by the pressure of a parent's leading hand. Her cry may thus have been the outbreak of a natural rapture of wondering gladness in the sudden recognition of Him, as if in unexpected deliverance from a close pursuing fiend. And her utterance, *Rabboni, διδάσκαλε*,

“My Teacher!”—appears to represent, on the part of one so related to Him, the perfection of a soul’s revering tenderness. The relation of true teacher to true pupil has in it a peculiar depth, of a species of tenderness that is more purely of soul to soul than perhaps any other species of tenderness arising out of natural human relationships. “Pupil” is another name for *disciple*. The human Son of God seeks pupils for His school when He calls them that labour and are heavy laden to His meek and lowly heart (Matt. xi. 29).

Why, then, is lowly Mary Magdalene so repulsed now? It is conceivable that, impulsively rushing into replacement in the familiar relationship, she should, though perceiving in the manifestation of Him a new supernatural grandeur, yet, to the detriment of her soul’s true life in Him, overstep the limit prescribed by that grandeur, by simply going, on the line of a habitual relationship, into *fondly idolising her teacher*. That for her might involve a leaven of sentimentalism separating her from God the Saviour in His person. Within the precincts of Christianity there may be, toward God incarnate, a fondly idolising manner of feeling that is perilously near to idolatry. For there may be absent from the heart of it that “fear of God,” the deep reverence for Deity, without which all religious feeling is essentially pagan. His own mother Mary (John ii. 1–11), when His glory was first beginning to be manifested through His miracles, had to be warned against imagining that her being the mother of Jesus entitled her to influence the Christ of God. Her maternal relationship has now, by Jesus on the Cross, been transferred from Him to the disciple whom He loved. And the point of His lesson to Mary Magdalene seems to be, that His death of the Cross has ended all His simply natural relationships to human kind. This may be a hard lesson for the moment. But it has to be learned. The sorrow of it natively turns into joy. And the fact is, that natural relationship to Christ is now for ever gone out of the life of humanity. “*My* Father and your Father, *my* God and your God,” seems to lift the matter up into an altitude of *sovereign* grace so lofty, that the little mundane distinctions, connected with the brief transition of the Eternal Son through time, are lost from view. That will be self-evidently clear as the risen sun,

when Christ has ascended into His predestined glory. But at the present juncture of His intermediate condition, *that might be forgotten*; and the consequence might be, a *taint*, even of idolising fondness, that would be as a poison in that remotest original fountain of the new life of the world.

His *reproaches*, first (Luke) to the two on the way to Emmaus, and then (Mark) to the eleven, which (John xx. 8, 9) we can see to have been merited by them all, disclose a deeper cause for warning than may have really been in Mary's case. What He reproached them for was a certain dull carnality manifested in unbelief,—unbelief notwithstanding what they enjoyed of evidence. (1) In the prophets, declaring that He "*ought*" to have suffered these things before entering into His glory;" and (2) in the testimony of those who had seen Him, showing that He now was entering into the glory after having undergone the sufferings. What thus comes to view is *the need of the Holy Ghost*.

Paul by and by (1 Cor. ii.) will be able to say, from experimenting among mankind, that the clearest and fullest external evidence is unavailing, unless God Almighty, along with outward light, give the inward gift of sight. It is important that the future apostles should be early made to know this; so that from the outset they may depend only on that power (Acts i. 8) from on high, and may proceed upon the view and feeling (1 Cor. iii. 6) that all real success has to come, not from wisdom, power, or authority of theirs, but only from the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts. And of that they now have a most memorably humbling experience in their own persons,—an experience which has in these accounts been put on record by themselves or from their testimony; and which doubtless they have faithfully made known to all nations in their Apostolic witness-bearing regarding the earthly ministry of Christ. *The apostles themselves were rebuked for unbelief*. And one of the occasions of their unbelief may have been, that the bodily presence of Christ among them was by them allowed to serve in place of the spiritual power of Christ in their souls. Hence the need of the lesson of that reserve or distance: a lesson which will by and by be completed by the blessing of departure (John xvi. 7): "It is expedient for you that I go

away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you."

His *giving the "infallible proofs,"* or even remaining with the apostles (Matt. xvii. 17), was an evidence of His forbearance with a "faithless and perverse generation." Luke distinctly shows that the power of carnality, in "blinding the minds of those which believe not" (2 Cor. iv. 4), was in their case not overcome simply by the external evidence of those "proofs." The two who walked to Emmaus had the external evidence of the appearance of Christ Himself to them in conversation, and in familiar fellowship at the same table. Yet (Luke xxiv. 16) "their *eyes* were holden that they should not know Him;" and if they did know Him at the close (ver. 31), it was not until "their eyes *were opened*." Again, the eleven at Jerusalem had the external evidence of prophecy. And they were fairly overcome by overwhelming force of what He showed them of Himself, though for some time (ver. 41) they "believed not for joy." Nevertheless, though, so to speak, their bodily eyes were opened, there had to be, further, an opening of their mental eyes. When He was beginning to give them (vers. 45-48), on the basis of Old Testament prescription, a foundation of instructions regarding the kingdom of God, "then *opened He their understandings*, that they might understand the Scriptures"—the *citadel* had to open its gates after the city gates were opened.

And so Paul, before exhibiting to the Ephesians the glorious fact of resurrection as a risen sun, yet (Eph. i. 18) has that prayer, for opening of the *eyes* of the *understanding* of his readers, which he may have learned from conversation with Luke about those Jerusalem appearances ("undesigned coincidence?"). In order to vision, even in outward light of evidence, there is need of an inward gift of sight. But not the less, there is need of the outward light. And while the Spirit is to be sent as an abiding gift of inward light, Christ Himself continues on earth after He is risen for the purpose of completing the gift of outward light in Him. And now, therefore, in prosecution of that gracious purpose toward mankind, He shows to the eleven His hands and His feet, and invites them to "handle" Him (ψηλαφάω) so as to *feel* sure that He is no mere "spirit," but a man of flesh and

blood; and further, He becomes known to them in breaking of bread. (John has a very important supplement here; but at present we simply follow Luke.) The two Jerusalem appearances, rounding the first week of the new-born Christendom, are connected together by the nature of the proceedings as one whole. The two meetings are the two parts of an adjourned meeting, making one completed interview, in which is probably laid the foundation of the whole instruction of the forty days, or at least there is definitive "breaking ground." The outcome of the proceedings is, completed establishment of the apostles in the belief (1) that Christ is risen, and (2) that this person who has appeared to them is Jesus the risen Christ. (Of course the formality of such propositions was not in the historical proceedings.)

Recognition of the personal identity of Jesus was a distinct thing from conviction and belief that the Christ was risen from the dead. "Recognition" (*ἀναγνώρισις*), as a *dénouement*, was the climax of the pathos in the classic drama. And in this history of the resurrection there is folded a most wonderful power of the pathos of "recognition." This we begin to see in the two Galilean appearances. We will suppose that the first of these was the one to the seven.

The Galilean seven (John xxi.) are of the apostles. There is not now on the part of Christ any remaining aspect of a distant grandeur. But (ver. 12) it may be understood that the disciplinary effect of His previous appearances is completed, so that there may be familiarity on His part which will not occasion to them the peril of irreverent lack of a becoming *fear* of God in Christ. On their part there is no remaining trace of a doubt as to the resurrection of Christ. They seem to be quietly waiting for the further instructions of the risen Lord. (Observe, they *count* their fish!) "They knew not that it was Jesus" (ver. 4), simply means, they were not aware that the person who appeared on the shore in the grey of the morning was Christ, now risen indeed. *Identification of the person* of Jesus was the purpose of this second of the wonderful draughts of fishes (how short the time, and yet it seems a whole generation, since the first!). Though they come to be sure about the person, yet there is a strangeness in the aspect which at once awakens curiosity and keeps it silent.

We assume that Paul's "five hundred persons" were the "disciples" (Mark xvi. 7) or "brethren" of Christ (Matt. xxviii. 10) who mustered in Galilee, on a mountain, in response to a circular summons from Him. "They worshipped Him; but some doubted" (Matt. xvii.). This at first sight has a look of some having questioned the reality of the resurrection. It will be remembered that a few days after this, at Pentecost, when the disciples first come out into distinct view of the world, the fact of Christ's resurrection is the fundamental article of their professed faith. Of those who assembled in Galilee, there might be some who needed to make inquiry in order to assure themselves. Some, for instance, converts of the missions of the twelve and the seventy, might never have seen Jesus before His death. And even those who had been acquainted with His person might now have a difficulty in recognising Him at first glance; as the apostles had at least occasional difficulty in recognising Him after He had repeatedly shown Himself to them with "infallible proofs."

We thus are led to think that *a great change in His outward aspect* must have taken place between His burial and His resurrection. The recognition, apart from the "infallible proofs" of His hands and His side, appears to have been especially through His *voice* (Luke xxiv. 32), and His *renewed familiarity* with His "friends," especially at the table (ver. 35; Acts x. 41). The *voice* appears to be the thing connected with man's corporeity whose identity is least liable to be mistaken. Jacob could disguise his hand: if he tried to disguise his voice he did not succeed. Though the fashion of a man's countenance should be changed, so that the people do not know him when he goes into their pulpit, they know him at once as their own old minister when he begins to speak. Familiarity renewed, occasions recognition. It may be through some one thing flashing a light of recollection over the whole. Thus the wandering stranger, vaguely trying to recall to mind what place this is, and what is the long-forgotten name that seems trying to come back to his mind, *knows* his lost name and his lost home when he hears the maiden singing—

Bertram's right, and Bertram's might,
Shall meet on Ellangowan height

Or the recognition may be more gradual and full, the whole disclosing itself imperceptibly as the advancing spring. One who has forgotten his mother-tongue, so that he cannot even articulate the vocables if he hear them, may recover his whole original gift of speech without a conscious effort at recovery, if he go and reside in the place and among the people where his mother-tongue is spoken. So Christ, *introducing* Himself by means of the "infallible proofs," *made Himself at home* through the familiarity of table intercourse and close instruction. That was a suitable means of making the recognition perfectly clear and full and final; so that ever after, the only doubt in the apostles' minds should be, whether it was really possible that *they* had *ever* doubted.

But *why, only three days after parting* from them, *should there be any need* of His giving "proofs" of His identity? We now have to look at *the physical fact* of a very great change (irrespective of such an act of *will* as may be indicated in Mark xvi. 12). A very considerable change, preventing recognition, may result from simply death; perhaps through bringing *the real man* into view, from behind the ruffling surface agitations of this life. A sculptor intending to prepare a posthumous bust of a famous Christian minister who had died, took a "cast" of the features. Those who had known the minister did not think the "cast" a good likeness. Those who had known him well said that the likeness was the best ever taken of him—especially as bringing into manifestation a certain fine and lofty quality—"dantesque," was the word of his mind or soul. What storms passed away from the Son of man with "It is finished!" Further, Jesus reminds Mary Magdalene that He now has entered, not the state of the dead, but the *state of the immortal*. Lazarus and the widow's son were recalled to life in the "natural body." So far as we know, the only "spiritual body" (1 Cor. xv.) ever seen among men in this world was that of Christ. Elias, on the Mount of Transfiguration, was in a sort of "day of heaven on earth." At the transfiguration itself, the disciples might not have been able to recognise His person through the glory if it had not been for the voices. And though in His intermediate resurrection condition He did not assume the glory of trans-

figuration, there no doubt was a very great transfiguration without the glory manifested full.

His *manner of appearing* (John xxi. 1) seems to have struck the Galilean seven. It is not only that He was somehow there, in the grey of the morning, He somehow was there *strangely*; simply there on the shore, as if He had not come. So in the garden He *is* with Mary: the moment before, His manifested presence appears to have been not more visible than His voice was audible. So in the afternoon ("in another form") He joins the Emmaus two—it does not appear whence, and He leaves them—it does not appear how; "He vanished out of their sight," *ἄφαντος ἐγένετο ἀπ' αὐτῶν*): not, He goes away, but He is gone; He *was* here, and He *is* invisible. And so perhaps more strikingly in the two Jerusalem appearances. When they were assembled within closed doors (Luke xxiv. 34-48; John xx. 19-23), "Jesus stood in the midst of them." And again, eight days after (John xx. 26-29), "came Jesus, *the doors being shut*, and stood in the midst."

The impression made by these descriptions is, that in course of the forty days (Acts i. 2-4) He was like one resident in a border-land between visibility and invisibility; with a power like that of the angels, to place Himself in sight, and to withdraw Himself from sight, at pleasure. Yet He had taken on Him, not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham. He was in a human body of flesh and bones, bearing marks which served for identification of the individual. How that could be, while He thus went hither and thither like a "spirit," we are not informed. Speculation in this region — *de statu mortuorum et resurgentium* — is finely illustrated, with affluence of imagination under control of judgment and of reverent sense, in Isaac Taylor's *Physical Theory of another Life*. But the region is mainly beyond the limit of our present inquiry.

The impression made on those who saw Him was correspondingly a feeling of *unearthliness* in His aspect. Why a man should be afraid of a spectre, we will not inquire; though we observe in passing that it speaks ill for our moral condition by nature, that we have an inborn dread of what is strange (sheep are timorous when trespassing). The apostles

were terrified, not by a heavenliness in the aspect of Christ, but by unearthliness of it. Heavenliness is not unearthly, as the shepherd David knows (Ps. xix. 4), when he sees the homely, kindly visitations of the sun with genial goodness reaching into the heart of everything below. But the disciples (Mark vi. 50), when they saw Him walking on the sea, were affrighted, thinking that it was a "spirit." And now when He has overcome death, their first impression of His appearing is not that made by the rising of a heavenly sun, it is as if the pallid moon, turned into blood, were fitfully glancing through the thunderclouds of a terrific night of storms and doom. The impression, which was partly through misapprehension, may conceivably have been wholly so. But apparently it had a basis of occasion in a reality of physical fact of the intermediate condition of Christ.

With reference to *the respective parts of the evangelists* in contributing to the history, it is to be observed, that they all make the resurrection period of Christ's manifestation on earth to have been occupied with instructions regarding the great campaign for the world's liberation by His gospel. The concluding section of *Mark* (xvi. 9-20) is, though highly elliptical, yet, from this central view-point, not only coherent but complete. *Luke's* especial point of view is, relatively to that campaign, *instruction to the apostles*, especially on the basis of the Old Testament revelation; an aspect which had a peculiar interest for Luke and others of the Pauline type of discipleship. What Matthew shows us is *the array of the "kingdom,"* in readiness to go forth to all nations, with its regeneration by the grace of three Persons in the unity of Godhead; so we see the general muster of the discipleship under Christ, who has around Him the chiefs of the new Israel of God. *John's* Gospel here is largely supplementary.

John alone gives the interview with Magdalene in the garden, and that Galilean appearance made ever memorable by, "Lovest thou me? — feed my sheep . . . feed my lambs." These are simply additions, of inestimable value, to the information given by the Synoptists. He, too, alone records the story of Thomas's irreverent presumption and its rebuke. And this addition of a like intrinsic value is organically connected with *a distinctively Johannine view of the*

history in the heart of it—especially a disclosure of the innermost relations of God's kingdom on earth to the three persons of the Trinity in so many distinctive aspects of redemptive action. *Giving the story of Thomas*, he alone records *distinctly* the two Jerusalem appearances, without which the facts regarding Thomas could not be intelligibly narrated. His distinct account of the first part includes the very important action and words of Christ in breathing upon the apostles, and saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained" (xx. 22, 23). This is in pursuance of what He has said at the same time (ver. 21), "Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." On comparing John here with Luke, we may find yet another "undesigned coincidence;" namely, of John's "receive ye the Holy Ghost," with Luke's "then opened He their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures." It is more important to observe, that in John the general reference of Jesus to His mission from the Father, and to a corresponding mission of the apostles from Himself, coincides with the specific information in Luke regarding His deriving the method of their mission to mankind from the Old Testament revelation of God's will. On the other hand, the authority conferred on the apostles in connection with remission of sins, corresponds to the parting charge in Matthew regarding baptism and other ordinances of Christ as King. This supplement by John thus lights up the whole matter anew from within.

We find the history of the resurrection really clear and complete for its purpose, bringing to view what seems in keeping with the nature of things, and the character of God, and the religion of the Bible. We have found nothing in the narratives to occasion any doubt or question as to authenticity or genuineness of any one of them. That is all that can be needed for defensive apologetics. But it is due to truth to say, that our searching study of them has left upon us the impression, that it is really impossible to study these accounts of the resurrection thoroughly and intelligently without coming to the conclusion that the history which

they combine to make is simply true. And we will not be moved from this though all men should say, that a history, so wonderful in the grandly simple unity of its very strange variety, has been composed by four winds, and a fifth disporting among the Cumæan leaves of the forest.

CHAPTER III.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE PROPHETS.

UNBELIEVING criticism of the New Testament, which proceeds upon the presupposition that the Old Testament is not true, is so far liable to the Abrahamic censure of incapacity for discerning truth,—“If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe though one should rise from the dead.” Those who neglect the ostensible evidence furnished by the Old Testament, calmly ignoring that as if it were a thing not worth considering, are necessarily disqualified for judging as to the whole claim of Christianity on the reason of mankind. That whole claim is seen only in the whole completed light of the two dispensations of the one religion. It is not as if the New Testament had in this relation been a sun, upon whose arising the law and the prophets must needs disappear from view like the moon and the stars. That is true in some respects. But (cp. Matt. v. 17–19) in the present respect of the question as to the truth of the religion, the sun, the completed fulness of the light evidenced and evidencing, is constituted only by the two dispensations as combining into one. And any neglect of the light which is derivable from the Old Testament is a very grave misfortune, relatively to man’s great interest in “knowing the truth” regarding the claims of Christianity to be received as from God.

SEC. 1. *As to our being on the foundation of the Old Testament Scriptures.*

To popular apprehension, or on a first view of the matter, the Bible religion is “one thing.” This professed revelation ostensibly has in it a solidarity which makes ignoring a part of it to be like shutting the eyes upon the whole.

Christ Himself, as we have seen, did not seek to have His claims considered out of connection with the Old Testament. On the contrary, in His fundamental *pronunciamento*, in the Sermon on the Mount, He strongly protested against the notion of His having come "to destroy the law and the prophets" (*καταλύσαι*)—literally, to "loosen" them, that is, to destroy them in respect of their *binding* power of right, to abrogate or cancel their normative *authority*. He intimated that the effect of His coming, "not to destroy, but to fulfil," is to establish them on a broader foundation in clearer light than before; so that their authority is more enduring than heaven and earth; and he who does anything, in any way, to undo their binding power, so far seems to place himself outside of the kingdom of heaven. And the action of Christ in His personal ministry on earth was fully in keeping with that inaugural declaration. A scholar who has made a special study of tracing the teachings of Christ to the Old Testament, finds that His very words are derived from the Old Scripture, and even His most characteristic utterances in parable are to be found there in germ.

When we look into the substance of His teaching and work, we perceive the same thing more impressively. He proceeds upon the view, that the Old Testament has an authority equivalent to that of God. It is in "the Law" (Luke x. 26) that He bids man find the principles as well as precepts of duty to God and man. It is in "the prophets" that (Luke xxiv. 25–27) He shows to His own disciples the things concerning Himself, and (vers. 44–47) the plan of the great campaign of Providence for the salvation of the world; He reminded His disciples (ver. 44), at the close of His ministry, that He had so spoken in the course of it. We saw in His practice of apology that, in fact, He had so spoken and so acted. He professed to have come to do the will of God; but it was (Heb. x. 1–5) the will declared in the Old Testament. He declared that He had come to bear witness to the truth; but it was the truth as revealed through Moses and the prophets. He proved His doctrine from Moses "in the bush," and from David in the Psalms. His very miracles He avowedly worked according to prescription of prophecy in Isaiah (Isa. lxi. 1; cp. Luke iv. 18–21; Matt. xi. 4, 5). And

with reference to particular actions, His well-known rule of life was, "it is written" in the Old Scripture: His departures from the letter of conformity to the word, He justified as being real fulfilment in the spirit or substance of the law; and He quoted from the Old Testament His warrant for the departure. Christ in this way not only assumed the perfection of the Old Testament revelation of moral law, and the definitive truth of its declaration of "things to come." He ascribed to the Old Testament Scriptures an *authority*, constituted by divinity, which is "destroyed" by us unless we accept them as authorities, binding our thought and action, ruling our faith and practice. For Moses is nothing—as Moses he is destroyed—unless he rule men's practice. And the prophets are nothing—as prophets they are destroyed—unless men receive their utterances as the oracles of God. There thus is an appearance of "something rotten," some darkness of the mind arising out of some deep misinclination of the heart, when men exercised about the truth or the meaning of the religion of Christ betray a disposition to ignore the Old Testament.

The case is not altered when we come to the Apostolic Age. Peter and Paul alike (Acts. ii. 25, etc., xvii. 3) derive proof that Christianity is of God from the Old Testament. At the synod of Jerusalem the Old Scripture is the one rule appealed to for determination of the judgment of "the apostles, elders, and brethren," in that first and only (real) Ecumenical Council of Christendom. And when we look into the inward substance of the teaching of the apostles, we perceive that that substance, in the heart of it as well as on the face of it, is, in effect and in intention, an "exposition" (John i. 18, lit. "expounded" him) of what was intimated in the law and the prophets, now "manifested" (ver. 14) by realisation in Christ Jesus. Thus Peter, the Apostle of the Circumcision, and apparently (1 Pet. i. 1) addressing the dispersed of Israel, —certainly, speaking as a typical Hebrew Christian,—does not feel any need of *saying*, like Augustin, *Vetus testamentum in novo patet, novum in vetere latet* ("the old is blossoming in the new, the new was budding in the old"). He simply proceeds upon the fact that Moses was a veiled Christ, so that now what we see in Christ is Moses unveiled (1 Pet. i. 9–12).

Amid all changes God's word remains the same (1 Pet. i. 24, 25). Consequently, it is not necessary so much as to make allusion to the greatly changed forms. What has to be spoken of is (1 Pet. ii. 1-9) the unchanging substance of the one fountain and foundation of true life, with the living temple, and its believing priesthood, and their true spiritual sacrifices; and thus the holy nation, which is appropriately God's own, His monumental people on the earth. The Christianity of Peter is not an isolated thing, like the water in Jacob's well; it has flowed in unbroken continuity from that rock, smitten in the wilderness, whence Peter, as believer and as apostle, has derived his new name (*Petros*, "man of Rock").

It is needless to dwell upon the case of John (John v. 39, 45-47). A decisive test is furnished in the teaching of Paul, in which (cp. Acts ix. 15) the Christ of Christianity as known to mankind is represented. Though he is the apostle of universalism, and the great battle of his theology was in defence of Christian freedom against usurpation of the Old Testament letter, nevertheless he is the apostle who, at every important point of doctrine, not only accepts the Old Testament in the spirit or substance of it, but (cp. 2 Tim. iii. 15-17) takes pains to show, and is not satisfied unless his pupils clearly see, that in everything his teaching really proceeds on Old Testament express prescription. He is the only Scripture writer whose practice bears a resemblance to the Cocceian view, that the universe of revelation is in every atom of the (Old) Scripture.

This comes out full-length in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*. Whether that Epistle be Pauline in authorship or not, it was a sound instinct that in the primæval collections placed it in the group of Pauline Scriptures. For certainly it is Pauline in type. And its typical Paulinism is constituted, not by its doctrine of salvation, which is the same in all the apostles, but by its finding everything in the Old Testament. It had need to be written, in order to give due prominence to this one aspect of real Christianity—"Moses unveiled." The Epistle to the Hebrews speaks from the heart of Apostolic Christianity; as if saying on behalf of all "the apostles, elders, and brethren," "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us;" while in respect of that one aspect, it is emphatically Pauline;

so that one well might speak of it all as an Epistle of Paul, though Paul had not written a word of it.

He was not (John vii. 15) one who "had never learned." He "served God from his forefathers," and always remained thoroughly an educated Old Testament theologian. His mind was full of the whole system of the Old Testament; the system was in his mind a Pygmalion statue, needing only the vital spark from heaven. When he was touched with that flame on his way to Damascus, then "straightway *he conferred not with flesh and blood*" (Gal. i. 16). He *turned sharp away from* the Apostolic college. It thus was made clear as an historical fact, that his gospel was not learned by him from the original apostles, and so that it must have come to him straight from God in Christ. But from God in Christ it came to him *through*, or *in*, the Old Testament Scripture.

The "revelation" (Gal. i. 2), in which he received his gospel is not to be supposed to have been a course of instruction, such as the twelve received (Acts ii. 2) in the period of the forty days; much less an education like that of their previous *curriculum* of training as "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word." There is no indication in his history of his having had such instruction or such training. And there apparently was no call for it in the nature of his case. About some particulars (cp. 1 Cor. xi. 23) of Church order, in the new conditions of the kingdom of God, he might require to receive positive instructions from the King. But as to the principles of the kingdom, the doctrines and laws of that religion which now is fulfilled in the Messiah Son of God, Paul had no need to be informed. The learned Rabbi had need only to be enlightened (cp. 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10; Eph. i. 18). He needed only to see and feel the significance of these things, now shining out in Christ (Heb. i. 2). So, in fact, if we trace the working of His mind in his theological teaching, we shall see that this is one who everywhere finds the Old Testament in the New; for whom the Old Scripture is the fundamental "Act" of legislation, so that any new Scripture (even of men who (1 Cor. ii.) speak "in demonstration of the Spirit," in "words taught by the Spirit," and who know that they "have the mind of Christ") can be only as an "interpretation clause" of that Act. Such interpretation is com-

petent only to the same authority which gave the laws. But that manner of the New Testament, representing itself as an exposition of the Old (John i. 18), shows that (Isa. lxi. 1) Christianity is New Testament Messiahism, and that Israel's religion was Old Testament Christianity.

Some perhaps are influenced, in their disposition to advertise out of connection with the Old Testament, by an impression that this will facilitate the defence of Christianity. The defence of truth is always imperilled by untruth. She will not employ Beelzebub even to cast out unclean spirits. "She never blushes except when there are concealments" (Tert.). And in this case the man who will not have her in the Alpha shall not have her in the Omega. Christ has to be "the first" in the Old Testament, in order to be in the New Testament as "the last." What comes from rejecting the Old is not spiritual Christianity, but at best incoherence. The man who, perhaps under the description of "Christianity *versus* Judaism," chooses to have a Christianity that is not in the Old Testament, is not simply confused in his mind; like him who, learning that the second course of musical instruction is cheaper and more "advanced" than the first, resolves that he will *begin with the second*, the "advanced" Christian is in peril, not only of losing the advantage of the preliminary instruction of Christianity, but of losing Christianity itself.

There is something in the very aspect of a Christianity ignoring the Old Testament, perhaps vehement in protestation of departure from it, that looks falsetto, forced, unnatural. When Peter was "cursing and swearing" in his denial of Christ, his very "speech bewrayed him." So of those who repudiate Moses and the prophets in the name of Christ. They cannot even speak of anything Christian except in the words of the Old Testament. Their language is tabernacle language, *mercy-seat, propitiation, sacrifice, priesthood, intercession, mediation, revelation*. Or it is Passover language, or some other mode of the *Lingua Sancta*, sacred "language" of Canaan. Their very Greek is Hebrew of Tarsus; Plato and Aristotle could make nothing of it; as—it has been said—William Pitt could not understand the plain gospel preaching of John Newton. There may be *too* much of this

(Foster's Essay, *Aversion of Men of Taste to Evangelical Religion*). But much of it there must be. For, in fact, it is the only language of Christianity. The characteristic conceptions of this religion have no other mode of human expression. No distinctive article of Christianity can be expressed except in terms which the Old Testament has formed. Without the Old Testament articulation, this religion is dumb,—it can speak only the common-places of deism, which is not a religion, and certainly is not Christianity.

The historical fact is, that the tendency of the disposition to abandon the Old Testament has been toward infidelity, rejection of Christianity, with perhaps retention of the name of Christ, and some sort of Christian profession. That was the direction characteristically taken by the one really formidable heresy or doctrinal departure from Christianity within the Church in the second century. From Marcion downwards, the various Gnostic sects, no matter how obscure may have been their doctrines otherwise, were unmistakably distinct in a general character of antipathy to the Old Testament. The Old Testament Creator came to be regarded among them as an impure malignant demon, from whose tyranny the New Testament Redeemer has come to set men free. That, of course, was real abandonment of Christianity; and there was but a step from it to that heathenish dualism of Manichæism which destroys the "Monarchy" of God, so dear to the primitive Christians, by having an eternal principle of evil, co-ordinate with the Eternal One who alone is God.

The same thing in substance is going on in our time. The disposition to separate from the Old Testament is not found among those Christians who heartily embrace the principles of Christianity itself. Evangelical Christians love the Old Scriptures. Those who condemn them, or disregard their authoritative teaching, are, as a class, not friendly to the gospel of Paul, and of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and of the original apostles, and of Christ. The gospel, the distinguishing doctrine of Christianity, the distinctive matter of this professed revelation, is not welcome to them. It is not foremost in their teaching, "all, and in all," as it was in the

faith and life of the first and second centuries. And in the heart of the systems to which they are addicted, there is found, when the matter is searched into, a meagre heathenish moralism, or some showy imposing pagan theosophy, disguising itself under a Christian terminology; so that there comes to be true again the description of the Hellenists in Socrates the Church historian, *Χριστιανίζουσι μὲν τῇ φωνῇ, τοῖς δὲ δόγμασιν Ἑλληνίζουσι* ("They are Christian in speech, indeed, but pagan in thought").

It is right that this should be held distinctly in view in an inquiry as to the truth of Christianity. *The Christianity about which we are inquiring*, and about which alone we will reason, is not whatever may happen to go under that name, but the Christianity of Christ and His apostles. And a Christianity that disregards or contemns the Old Testament is not likely to be *theirs*; for *they* not only revered the Old Testament, but avowedly derived their Christianity from its teaching. It therefore is well that we should be on guard against that disposition to ignore the Old Testament; were it only because otherwise we may be drawn away into wasting our time upon opinions that have nothing to do with Christianity but usurpation of its name—as Celsus put on the mask of a Jew.

But the interest of our inquiry is more directly affected. To ignore the Old Testament is to exclude from view a very important evidence of the divinity of the New Testament religion. Paul says (Eph. ii. 20) that we are built on the foundation "of the prophets." Take the Old Testament as generally answering to that name—as a system of intimation of what should come to pass. Christ appealed to that prophecy as showing that He is from God. The apostles appealed to it in proof that the Christ must needs have come, and that this Jesus was the very Christ. The primitive Christians, after the apostolic age, laid main stress upon the evidence of Old Testament prophecy, as manifestly coming into fulfilment in that first age, in their demonstration of the reality of supernatural revelation through the apostles and in Christ. That fairly raises the question for us to grapple with, whether the Old Testament has not in it an evidence of prediction of the incalculable, the wonder of wisdom, which is the seal of God

upon Christ and Christianity. It may be maintained—and, of course, it will be maintained by unbelievers—that there was no such thing as prediction of the incalculable, making a *miracle* of wisdom. *That has at least to be inquired into* by us, if we will really know the truth as to the religion of the New Testament. Regarding the New Testament religion, the root question of Apologetic in our day is as to the supernatural. The supernatural in the miracles is the only stumbling-block in the way of believing the Gospel history; for, in fact, if the supernaturalism of the miracles were taken away, it might not be difficult to explain everything else away into the flimsy gaudy naturalism of an *Ecce Homo*. But the question of the supernatural in that history is one of historical fact; and if, in point of historical fact, that history be replete with supernaturalism of fulfilled prophecy, its miracle of wisdom will serve to accredit the Gospel miracle of power. Hence to ignore the Old Testament is to sit in judgment, while excluding an important element of evidence from the scale of the judgment. That is a way, not of finding truth, but of losing it.

Again, older than the distinctive prophetic activity and its principles of the kingdom of God, there is the Mosaic system of ritual and of political constitutions, with its presupposition of miraculous deliverance from Egypt followed by occasional miracles in Canaan and in Babylon. The enchanters owned “the finger of God.” If His finger was once seen anywhere in Egypt, or in Canaan, or in Babylon, then the whole case of anti-supernaturalism collapses, and the root objection to Christianity and to salvation by grace is seen to have no foundation. For the root objection is, that miracle is impossible; but miracle is not impossible if it be a fact. Of course the fact will be denied, as no doubt it was denied in Egypt until men were compelled to own it. But, though it should be denied by unbelievers, plainly *it ought to be inquired into* by those who wish to know the truth. So that again to ignore the Old Testament is to be out of the way of finding truth.

What we see in Mosaism with its miracle is not mere unconnected wonders like the “prodigies” or “monsters” of heathen annals. It is a deliberate procedure of the living God for a great avowed purpose of judgment and of mercy,

quite plainly shown on the face of the working, as well as clearly shining in the heart of it. And that purpose, again, with its "manifestation" of the glorious character of Jehovah, was from the outset connected with an ulterior purpose or end. The supernatural deliverance of Israel from Egypt and their instatement in Canaan, were from the outset connected with a design of sovereign mercy, which had been intimated from the time of Abraham's call with reference to all the populations of mankind. And the miracles of the first redemption from Egypt, constituting a sample of the manner of the working of God for that end, served as an indication of the manner in which He might be expected to proceed, if in further prosecution of His design to a completion He should come to accomplish another redemption. Now, another redemption is what at present is in question. The true Israel regarded the rest of Canaan as only a step toward the true "rest remaining for the people of God," and the achievement of this rest is to be through a redemption. How then did God proceed to that first redemption? It was (Ex. iii., iv.) by the way of miracle, by acts manifestly supernatural showing the "power and presence" of God in the movement, and accomplishing the deliverance in a manner that made Him known. That, then, is *His way*. And now when He has come to the other redemption, we may look (2 Pet. i. 16-18) for His coming to it in *His way*, the way of miracle, manifest supernaturalism, showing His "presence and power" in the movement, and accomplishing the deliverance in a manner that shall make Him known. Thus the Mosaic wonders not only show that miracle is possible; they show that the Gospel miracle-working is *antecedently probable*.

Further, that work done for Israel, and in it, and by it, was in pursuance of an ancient covenant promise. "The law" of Moses was only a "veil" (2 Cor. iii.), a thing superinduced upon the revelations that had been made to the patriarchs; and in the patriarchal age there came into view, through angelophanies and otherwise, the principle of *supernaturalism* or positivism, as characterising the communications of God to man. The central representation here is—witness circumcision—that of *Covenant*, with signs and seals, with promise or with penal sanction. That relationship of covenanting appears

as the right normal relation of God to man, not only as far back as Noah and the Flood, but in the condition of the first man unfallen (Witsius, *De Economia Fœderum*). Covenant, through action of two wills in express agreement and reciprocal obligation contracted freely, represents what is highest in the rational free agency of men among themselves, and in the scriptural representation it is made to have place in the religious relationship of man to God wherever that relationship is rightly constituted. But this again destroys the whole system of anti-supernaturalism. If there ever has been in the world, since man was made, any such thing as covenant of nature or of grace, though only by one word or look or other sign, then the assumption that there is no supernatural, and that there can be no real beginning, is without foundation. For covenant, though it should only be a man's covenant, a child's bargain about its play, is a *supernatural thing*, a real beginning, as truly as if it had been the calling of a world into being with a word (Heb. xi. 3). Everything in a covenant and all that proceeds from it is a creation of pure *will*, and has no root in any necessity of nature. But the Old Testament is everywhere full of covenant. All its multitudinous particularism of regulation is a multitudinous articulation of covenant,—that is, pervading all the detailed particularism of life, affirmation of something that has arisen, not from any mere necessity in the nature of things, but from free agency in its highest culmination on the part of man as well as God. Here, too, as before, to ignore the Old Testament is to close the professed inquirer's eyes against the light. How can it be pretended that there is real inquiry as to the possibility of supernaturalism, if there be not careful searching of the evidence of the multitudinous Old Testament covenanting, which apart from supernaturalism has no meaning nor possibility of meaning?

Finally, the representation of man's condition, as covenanting with God, is contained in a framework, representing the constitution of man and of the world in relation to God. The race of men is in some connection with spiritual principalities and powers in some way connected with our earth. The chosen seed are in connection with "the rest of mankind," who seem to have their own respective ways, but upon whom God

has the hand of His providence and the eye of His prophecy. The man's true original condition, from which he fell, into which he is being restored, is exhibited in the republication of the moral law; which is put into place of highest honour, beneath the throne of God, and is brought out into a variety of wholesome political or civil constitutions, adapted to the condition of the chosen race receiving them. And all the manifold providence of God, "most holy, wise, and powerful," is shown to be in consecution of a great original act or work of creation, which places Him in a transcendency far above all things, and yet brings Him into the intimately close relation constituted by their vital dependence on Him;—such that He "fillet all in all," and "worketh all in all," and they all "live, and move, and have their being" in Him.

Now that view, or representation, of the general system of things has to be taken into account by us if we will judge rightly in the question as to the truth and the divinity of the religion which is contained in it as in a frame of luminous illustration (p. 212). That representation was manifestly fitted to educate the Hebrews into judging about the details that might come to them by comparing such details with that system as a whole (2 Cor. ii. 15). The exercise thus arising is that of which a famous monument was raised by Bishop Butler in his *Analogy of Religion*. He takes the general ground, that the Bible is shown to be divine by its being "a history of the world as God's world." But what he works out in the *Analogy* is the view that religion is so far evidenced as presumably divine by its being of a piece with the system of the world. That view was powerfully applied in the primitive Apologetic for destructive criticism of the heathen religions. These religions were shown to be false by this mark, of their being absurd or immoral, and thus manifestly not being by inspiration of the Ruler of the world, or of the Creator of the reason of man. And the same view was applied in the *Epistle to the Hebrews* (Heb. ii. 10) to what might be described as the criticism of the New Testament by the Old, in the utterance, "It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons into glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

The "perfection" (τελείωσις) here is a distinctively Hebraical expression. It points to atonement, in which the offering priest is the suffering victim, the *action* of our covenant Head is *passion* of Him who for our redemption was offered without spot unto God. The "many sons brought into glory" likewise denote the seed of that Abraham, who rejoicing saw not only multitudinousness of the seed in the cold and barren sand, but its coming glory in the radiant host of the stars. But what we mark is, "It became Him for whom are all things and by whom are all things." That is to say, this work, this process in accomplishing redemption, was *Godlike*; it was *the distinctively* Godlike work of the All-worker, "for whom are all things and by whom are all things." There is here an appeal from the heart of the Old Testament to that whole system of things (Col. i. 17) which is the effect of creation and the domain of providence; appeal of which the point is, that the way of redemption, through the suffering of that Head, is most gloriously in harmony with the indications of the character of God in the universe.

But the indications of the character of God in the universe are rightly perceptible only when the universe is rightly placed to our view. Hence the importance of Butler's suggestion, that the Bible is shown to be true by being "a history of the world as God's world." We shall have occasion to dwell upon the fact, that it gives *a real view*, which is *the only* real view, of the universe under God; while there is no possibility of *any* real view of the universe unless it be a view of the universe under God, as there is no real view of the solar system without the sun. But at present we need only say that a coherent comprehensive view of the universal system, under the aspect which it ought to present for religious mind,—this, as introduced in the Old Testament, may be very important as placing the mind rightly for appreciation of what comes to view in the new dispensation (Luke ix. 30, 31). Suppose, then, that the Old Testament is ignored. Then the critic, in handling details of Christianity, may be really blind in soul (2 Cor. iv. 4); the "light" that is in him may be "darkness;" because his principle of judgment is mere worldliness; and to mere worldliness that may be "a stone of stumbling and rock of offence," which, to one who has in his mind the

spiritual principles of the Old Testament, is gloriously in harmony with all that is most high and holy,—all that “became Him for whom are all things and by whom are all things.” A naturalistic critic can see the suicide of a weak visionary where a spiritual-minded Hebrew sees the culmination of moral sublimity in sacrifice to God for man (1 Pet. iii. 24)—“He bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness.”

Here we are again brought round to the point at which we have repeatedly found ourselves, of perceiving that only (1 Cor. ii. 15) a *moral* or spiritual criticism is competent in this case, because the system in question is essentially moral or spiritual. It is “in *holiness*” that Jehovah is “glorious.” The man who does not see and feel what is thus *morally* beautiful and great is incapable of applying the text “it became Him for whom are all things and by whom are all things.” A man of sorrows, fainting under the punishment of dragging a log of wood,—“He bore His Cross,”—is not sublime to the critic who sees in that man only a disappointed impostor; nor to any one who cannot appreciate the love of God, in making Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be the righteousness of God in Him. Those who desire to know the truth may find fruitful light of guidance in the Old Testament, bringing them to the true central viewpoint of the supremacy of morality—“the kingdom of God.” Relatively to judging (Gr. “criticising”) the New Testament rightly, that is, according to its true inward nature, nothing but disqualification of darkness is to be found in the icicles of Zeno or the puddle of Epicurus.

Those who can disengage their mind from mere noisy oppositions of unbelief will find that a great additional weight of impressiveness to the reason is given to the detailed evidences of Bible religion by the character of *completeness* which it owes to the Old Testament. It is found in effect, laying hold of the whole mind, to be a complete course as well as system of instruction to a man. And this character of soul-satisfying completeness is no doubt one of those things which have given to “*The Book*” (lit. meaning of, “the Bible”)

such a hold of the mind and heart of the peoples: causing it to be believed where it is read, and to be the creator of new literatures, and of the only civilisation that has reached into the life of "the masses" individually; and showing it to be the Book of Man, which is presumptive evidence of its being the Book of God—all nations flowing unto Him there. The grand completeness is illustrated by the fact that this record of revelation has in it three epochs, corresponding to the three persons of the Godhead. In the Acts and Epistles we see the epoch of the Holy Ghost in the application of redemption. In the Gospel histories what is shown is the epoch of the Son of God in impetration of redemption. But in order even to see these aright, we must look on them in the light of destination of redemption, by the love of God the Father, in that Old Testament revelation to which pertaineth "the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, *and the promises*" (Rom. ix. 4).

Men seriously inquiring and finding that the book is practically equivalent to the revelation it professes to record, will be materially influenced in their judgment of it by its containing, or not containing, something like a full directory for the practice of a Christian life on earth. And if the Old Testament be included, the Bible really has a directory that is complete, so that mankind who have tried it have found it sufficiently full for making "the man of God to be perfect, thoroughly furnished for every good work." But there is no such directory if the Old Testament be excluded. We saw that Peter and Paul have each a directory; but it is of a specifically distinct nature from what we have now in view,—that is, from information as to what *are* the duties of a man as distinguished from instructions regarding the manner and spirit of doing those duties. Thus the New Testament has intimations of the manner in which a Christian as a Christian ought to bear himself toward the magistracy, the civil government, of the country in which he is a "stranger and pilgrim." But only in the Old Testament can he find heaven's light on *the nation's* right and duty relatively to God, and the various obligations and opportunities of serving God and man which the Christian has through his position, not as a stranger and pilgrim in the world, but as a citizen of the nation. So,

again, as to the two great constitutions, the twin living foundations of truly prosperous human society on earth—the Sabbath and the family. The Day of Rest has no legislative sanction but in the fourth commandment of the Decalogue; and only in the Old Testament is there any distinct intimation of a *principle as to marriage* that shall effectually conserve the purity of human society in its fountain of the family. In fine, it is only in the Old Testament that we have the moral law. The New Testament references to that “law” presuppose the Old Testament declaration of it. And, speaking roundly, an observation which we made on the general relation of the Old Testament to the New may here and now be applied to the particular matter of specification of particular duties. In relation to these, the Old Testament is the fundamental “Act” of legislation;—the New is only the “interpretation clause.” And while the completeness thus constituted is a presumptive proof of divinity of the revelation, *incompleteness*, such as there would be in absence of the Old Testament, would have been presumptive evidence against the Bible and its religion.

Christians often do not realise what the incompleteness would be without the Old Testament; because, in fact, they *are* not without the Old Testament. They are in the light of the Old Testament, and so they do not feel their need of it. Hence they, too, may occasionally be found thoughtlessly unthankful, like the man who said that in daylight we have no need of the sun. “The commandments,” for instance; in reading what the New Testament says about them we experience no difficulty and see no obscurity, *because* the Old Testament light on the matter is clear: the New Testament statement presupposes that light. And it might be a profitable exercise to endeavour to make out how much of the New Testament would be really intelligible to us if we had not the light of the Old Testament. It would be found by us impossible to make our way so far as to the end of the genealogy in the first chapter of Matthew. On the whole, the New Testament is the second part of a word; and it is full of meaning, *as* the second half of a whole word. But how would it be with the second half alone? It is difficult to say; because in a Christian country it is perhaps impossible for any one to

divest himself of Old Testament ideas; such as the great ideas of creation, providence, and redemption. But we know that while the first half of a word may suggest a meaning, the second may not. We may form an approximate judgment of what would happen from the result in the case of those who *try* to ignore the Old Testament. In their case, the result has often been to show that the second half of the word, which they choose to retain, is really unintelligible to them. Witness the fact that what they find in it is perhaps a barren heathenish moralism, perhaps a pompous pagan theosophy. In the judgment of Solomon, the woman who was willing that the children should be cut into halves was not the mother of the living one: she was mother only of the dead—the victim of her heartless carnality. It can be understood that mutilation or truncation of the Scriptures, though leaving room for dissertation about details, may put it completely out of the critic's power to form a sound judgment of a matter which has to be seen in its totality. Exegetical atomism is suicidal.

We thus are led to note another aspect of the completeness which is impressive to those who think of God as a Father, providing for the education of poor prodigal sons of men,—“He sent His word and healed them.” One who set himself to the question, “What one thing is there that would serve as an instrument for the complete education of a man?” came to the conclusion that that one thing is the Bible,—a conclusion to which he certainly was not brought by sectarian prepossession. It has been suggested that the panorama of creation in Gen. i. brings the details into view in the order in which an infant human being first begins to be distinctly aware of them in the actual system of the world, thus: 1. Light; 2. An Above and a Below; 3. Below, the green earth; 4. Above, the starry firmament; 5. Between them, in air, the Birds; 6. Near Home (*γυνῶθι σεαυτον*), the Beasts; and, last of all (if seen, except in the looking-glass), Man. Generalising, we may say that from the first word of the Bible to the last every sentence is a preparation for all that follows; when the reading is completed, the Bible has completely introduced itself to the reader, and has introduced him into a complete view of the universe under God;—the only real view of the

universe that has ever entered into the mind of man. The view, further, that thus is given, is not of a dead universe, as under the dissecting knife of "science," but of a living world, radiant with glory of the All-worker shining through. And, while the Book is thus "a history of the world as God's world," it is at the same time a poetry most wonderful, and, if we be worthy (1 Cor. ii. 6), a philosophy true and divine. It is thus that the Bible (1 Cor. i. 26-28) has laid hold of mankind, out of the sunken "masses" raising up radiant individualities to "shine like the stars for ever and ever."

But could that course of education have place in our life without the Old Testament?

If we will take the Old Testament into our system of belief, we, of course, shall find *difficulties* in the way of faith that are not found by those that leave that Scripture out of account. The man who sits down in the middle of a wood, and who does nothing, does not meet the difficulties which are overcome by him who makes his way out of the wood. But he is a lost man.

Regarding difficulties generally, it is to be observed that they have to occur in human experience of reality of life in this world. If the Bible had been without difficulties, that would have occasioned a just suspicion; by so far showing that the Bible is of a different character from that of other means employed by God for the training and the trying of mankind, "What son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" The heavenly Father does not spoil His children by sparing the rod. He employs the rod of Moses, a schoolmaster, to bring men unto Christ. And (Matt. xi. 27-30) in the school of Christ, who is "meek and lowly in heart," and who gives rest unto them that "labour and are heavy laden," the "yoke" and the "burden" may consist partly of such "difficulties." He deals with the soul according to its nature and condition. He takes it away from the soft, unmanly selfishness of Egyptian plenty into wilderness-wandering and warfare. But this is His way of bringing men into rest that shall be glorious. The difficulty may prove to be a burden, like the eagle's burden of wings, which enable him to soar. The law is a schoolmaster whose severity is love, bringing men to

Christ who sends it. But God is able to show Himself in this matter froward to the froward. Thus we read in 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16 of men who found difficulties in the Scriptures, "some things hard to be understood." And "they that were unlearned and unstable" (mentally crude and slippery-footed) "wrested these to their own destruction." But the Scriptures, of which the difficulties were so abused, were not in the first instance those of the Old Testament ("the other Scriptures"). Those here spoken of in the first instance are the Epistles of "our beloved brother Paul."

The "difficulties" of Scripture are not found practically weighing much in the experience of those who care for truth. Often when searched into they are found to have nothing in them. We went closely into investigation of that Gospel history of resurrection, which by unbelieving critics is understood to be full of difficulties, especially "discrepancies," in the narratives, such as to make the narrated fact incredible. We found no *such* difficulty. The only difficulty we found was, in determining what view to take of a diversity in statements about appearance to Magdalene and to "women." That showed us that *we* do not fully know about this detail on the border of the history. It did not in any way suggest to us that there had been no appearance to any one, or, that the resurrection was not a fact; generally, believers have not gone so searchingly into details as to find bread and honey in the lion "difficulty." They may thus be under an impression that there are "discrepancies" where there is none. But that impression is not found in any way to prevent them from believing the history. Nor are difficulties of that sort found really operative in preventing earnest seekers for truth from believing. Similarly, the Old Testament "difficulties," brought distinctly into view, will not prevent any one from believing the Bible who is not otherwise biassed against the *religion* of the Bible; while to ignore the Old Testament would be to lose the benefit of its clear light. To remain away from it is, further, to be haunted with an impression that there are *difficulties* there; to approach, and resolutely inquire into the facts, is to come to know, to see and feel, that here there is a great additional light of demonstration on the system of Bible religion as a whole.

SEC. 2. *Moses in the Law: trial of the "Mythic Theory."*

There is a class of cases in which the "mythic theory" has a claim upon the attention of scholarly antiquarians, the cases, namely, of the origination of stories about supernaturalism, such as appearances of gods in human form in the *primæval* period, or Heroic age of the history of heathen peoples. In such cases the general fact is that the story grew up in the mind of a people without their being aware of any process of invention in their mind,—at that early stage in which a people does not, in its tradition, make a distinction between imaginary and real. There were such stories, which may have been wrought up into hymns, like those of Callimachus or Epimenides, so as to be "cunningly devised fables," and which, before dying out, may have served for a time upon the stage, at first in deep tragedy and then in easy festive comedy, until at last they vanished into farce. The mythical hypothesis is that such will ordinarily be found to have been the origin of stories about miracle in connection with religion.

The only question of serious interest in that connection is, whether it can be applied successfully to explanation of the *Bible* narrative as involving miracle. Can that narrative, which underlies the religious belief of the civilised world, and which has created the true civilisation, be explained into *myth*?

In the case of the Gospel history of the earthly ministry of Christ, the attempt to account for it by the "mythic theory" has by the confession of the theorists failed. The proposition that the wonders of the life of Jesus Christ are not historically real, but that they grew up after His time in the imagination of primitive Christians, brooding in a day-dream over the career of their Hero until there insensibly grew up around the memory of Him a glory of miracle after the fashion of the legendary miracles of an earlier age, was a theory which had no interest for real men apart from the great history which it assailed, and merited the scorn with which Dr. Arnold treated the suggestion that mythic stories "arose under the Roman empire to be believed in by a Paul."

Notwithstanding this failure of the theory when applied to

the life of Christ, it is conceivable that some might desire to have it tested by another case of Bible history; we shall now proceed to submit it to further examination as applied to the case of Moses in the Law.

But before passing from the Gospels to the more ancient gospel of the exodus, we ought to mark in our minds the significance of the abandonment of the mythic theory of the life of Jesus. It means, to begin with, that *the type of criticism*, of which that theory was a sample production, is discredited. *The spirit and method of inquiry*, which resulted in that blundering crime, are shown to be untrustworthy, dangerous guides. The same type of criticism, the same spirit and method of "historical" research, may come forward with some new explanation of the Gospel history, explaining it away. In which event men of sense, who may not have learning or leisure for going into investigation of the grounds and reasons, may do well to recall to mind, that from that workshop there previously went an explanation, with great confidence, which instantly evoked the scorn of a thoroughbred manly scholar, and which now is hardly remembered, even in the schools of learning, with sufficient remaining distinctness to be useful in illustration of contrast.

In passing to Exodus, we ask ourselves, What is it that gives the dream-theory a reality of interest in connection with Exodus? And the answer is, the bearing of the matter on the *supernaturalism* of Exodus. That is to say, not the greater or less amount, or the species or variety, of supernatural in that old history; but the *existence* of the thing, in any measure or of any kind. But now we remember that on behalf of mythicism, the *existence* of the thing is admitted—in relation to the Gospel history. For the theorists, in withdrawing from that field, have owned that their theory is unable to explain the Gospel story with its miracles into a dream. Suppose, then, for the sake of argument, that the Gospel miracles are a no-dream, but reality. Thus (1) there is no impossibility of miracle, that can be pleaded *in limine*, in bar of a serious judicial consideration of the historical evidence for miracle in Israel's deliverance from Egypt; but (2) the Gospel miracles are directly a presumption in favour of reality of Exodus miracles; and (3), indirectly, the Gospel

miracles attest the Exodus miracles by proving the divine authority of Jesus, who sets His seal on Moses. We now will contemplate the Old Testament ancient time itself. There, we perceive, dream-theory has been quietly disporting itself,—perhaps under a vague impression that there is safety for theorists in the obscurity of remote antiquity, far from the madding crowd of Arnolds, with their broad, strong light of classic knowledge and strength of disciplined reason, making scorn to be so promptly and fatally crushing. Certainly, the antiquity is very great; a millennium before ancient Rome had emerged from the reeds of the Tiber, with time and leisure to dream *her* dreams of old mythic story, of the twin-founders and their wolf-nurse, and Egeria at the fountain, and the two divine brothers at the fateful Lake Regillus. It was even before the origin of the Hellenic mythology, and back beyond that Heroic age in which the Hellenic myths arose, in the far distant period of Egyptian antiquity—

When the Memnonium was in all its glory;
And time had not begun to overthrow
Those temples, palaces, and piles stupendous,
Of which the very ruins are tremendous.

But even in that “high and hoar antiquity,” the application of the mythical hypothesis is prevented by a fatal obstacle on the very threshold. The question is as to what was in ancient Egypt. And the fact is, that *Israel was there in historical reality*. That is an essential presupposition of the hypothesis itself in this proposed application of it. What is proposed is, by means of the hypothesis, to explain how certain narratives grew up among a people *that had come out of Egypt*. And otherwise, as we soon shall see, this fact of an exodus from Egypt is beyond all dispute historical. Now the fatal obstacle, at the very first step, which is encountered by a mythical hypothesis in this application is, that among an Israel which had come out of Egypt a growth of mythic stories was *a natural impossibility*.

There are plants which can grow in only certain soils. When Sir Walter Scott was collecting the Border Ballads, he was told by the mother of James Hogg, who gave him some of them from her heart’s memory, that, once they were divulged to mankind in a printed book, they would not con-

tinue to be sung or cantilated on the Border. And among scholarly students of mythology (witness Grote, *History of Greece*, in his elaborate discussion of the Homeric poetry) it is agreed, that no true myth (of the kind now in question) can come into existence among a people that has outgrown the simple unreflecting period of its infancy, so far as to have a beginning of literature in the simple form of prose history. Now the Egyptians, at the time of the Israelitish sojourning in their land, were far beyond that infancy. They were in the maturity of a civilisation which, even then, was of an antiquity mysteriously remote, as the sources of that great river, of which a poet sang two millenniums after—

“*Et gens si qua latet nascenti conscia Nilo.*”

—LUCAN, *Pharsalia*, i. 20.

Israel was born and bred in that Egyptian civilisation. Moses was “learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.” There is in the British Museum a manuscript that was written in Egypt centuries before his birth. There is unquestionable monumental evidence of a literature in Egypt that went back far beyond the time of Abraham. The people of that land had a veritable passion for writing about everything; they could hardly make a bargain without perpetuating the fact of it in a written voucher (Wilkinson, iii. 150). An Israel brought up in Egypt could no more dream itself into myths than Ulysses could turn himself into a baby.

But though Egypt had been buried with Pharaoh and his captains in a Red Sea of oblivion, there is on this side of the sea abundant evidence of the historical reality of the exodus and its wonders. As to the exodus, it now has place, irrespectively of its bearing on religion, as not only a historical event, but (Bunsen, *Egypt's Place in Universal History*) the true beginning of history for mankind. But we will inquire for ourselves, with the materials in our hands.

(1.) *The monumental nation of Israel.*

“If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe though one should rise from the dead.” In the existence of that Israel, whom we see every day among our neighbours, there is an evidence almost as impressive to the

reason as if the ancient Egyptian mummies were to rise from the dead and speak, in witness that they had seen the Hebrews escaping in safety beyond the Red Sea, while the pursuing host had disappeared like lead into the mighty waters. Every people is in a sense monumental, as the child is father of the man. But Israel among all historic races is distinctively the monumental nation.

What is most impressive is the *durableness* of this monument, *cere perennius*; the seeming indestructibleness of the Hebrew type of nationality, like Horace Smith's own "statue of flesh, immortal of the dead." Eighteen hundred years ago, that nation was crushed as by an avalanche, to be dispersed, as the dust is borne by winds, over all the regions of the earth. In course of the centuries, the peculiar people have been cruelly oppressed and driven, "scattered and peeled," so that it is a world's wonder that their identity has not been long ago lost among the confused *débris* of humankind, effaced beyond all possibility of recognition. But the national type remains clear and distinct, as a coin of Solomon's reign. The great empire which dispersed the Jews from Palestine has passed away like a dream. The nations which then flourished are now but antiquities, like mummies and fossils. The historic peoples of that ancient time are of so many types, that now are lost except on coins in museums. The Hebrew type is firm, uneffaced, and seemingly ineffaceable; as if the exodus had taken place but yesterday, and the Sinaitic branding on this day. They have mingled among other peoples, speaking their tongues, and sharing their common lot. But at this hour, among any population of mankind upon earth, a Jew or Jewess is distinguished at a glance from every other creature under heaven. *Si monumentum quæris, circumspecte.* Truly the exodus has a living monumental evidence in the very existence of that nation. But now we look more closely, and we begin to see other monuments of the *character* of the exodus.

(2.) *The Tabernacle of "Testimony."*

We saw that the *religion* of the Old Testament, as represented by the Tabernacle, is the religion of the New Testament, as, *e.g.*, expounded in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*. We

now desire to trace that *religion* back to the primæval origin of the monumental nation. And that we can do, in a solidly historical manner, in connection with the nation itself. The Hebrew nation is nothing apart from that religion. And we now will look upon it as the ancient custodier of the religion enshrined in the Tabernacle.

Let us not fear that the historic people shall carry us no further back than to its dispersion in the second century, or, than to the destruction of its Jerusalem Temple in the first. We now shall take, into association with that national Hebrew type of physical aspect, the Temple itself, such as it was before it came to be of cedar and stone,—when it was only a Tabernacle, a General's Tent, the Dwelling of Jehovah, the “man of war.” Such as the tradition makes it, it surely was almost a miracle of noble simple beauty, the realised ideal of the untranslatable Horatian—*simplex munditiis*. In simple spiritual beauty it must have excelled all other dwellings ever made by human hands. The history of that frail thing, perishable as a rose of Sharon or a lily of the valley, but standing imperishably in every Christian heart, will show us how powerfully tenacious can be the grasp of evidence really monumental.

The nation's existence, so unmistakably distinct in the experience of the Romans long after Vespasian and Titus, we need not linger to establish at a time so comparatively recent as that of the Babylonish captivity. Isaiah had not long before spoken of “a voice that should cry in the wilderness about preparing the way of the Lord.” And the greatest of road-makers had, on the banks of the Tiber, begun that career of conquest and subjugation which, when the fulness of the times came, had made “the whole world” ready, with road-system complete, to be reached from Jerusalem by tidings in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin regarding the King of the Jews. Far beyond Isaiah's time, at the building of the first Temple, we find the nation not only in existence, but at the culmination of its prosperity and greatness, in the glorious reign of Solomon the wise,—a glory which had been readily achieved under David the magnificent, “the sweet singer of Israel,” the man after God's own heart.

At that time there was in existence a venerable fabric,—

"the Tabernacle of the Lord's House, which Moses the servant of the Lord made in the wilderness" (1 Chron. xvi. 29). As there has been a disposition, in the interest of the mythic mania, to make ancient Israel, as well as the primitive Church, into an infantile dreamer of dreams, it may be well to mark distinctly the fact that here, at the building of the Temple, we are far past the period in a people's life in which it is possible for a myth to come into existence. We are not only in the historic period, but in the very culmination of the national history. In the glowing page of the historian (1 Kings iv. 20, 29), we find two things which are as the sand on the seashore. One is the multitude of the happily prosperous population, "eating, drinking, and making merry." The other is the manifold wisdom in the mind and heart of the king. Solomon is in Scripture the representative of sense, mother-wit, the sagacity of proverb-lore, rising to the height of supernaturalism. With him were associated the superlatively able men, who along with David had consolidated the nation into this greatness. Navigation had begun, as well as commerce by land, and political statesmanship in relation to surrounding peoples. *The nation was in the full maturity of its manhood.*

The existence of that ancient Tabernacle has been called in question, again, by those who have no real ground of history for their guesswork. Its existence is formally intimated to us in the only extant historical authority on the subject. And it is curiously attested by the circumstance, that the Temple is found to have been an exact *replica* of the Exodus "Tabernacle," only the cedar and stone Tabernacle is on a scale precisely twice as large as that of the primæval fabric. In an article by the Dean of Peterborough (*Contemporary Review*, A.D. 1888), it is stated, that within the frame of the Peterborough Cathedral there has recently been discovered the form of the ancient Saxon Church; and that the cathedral is found to be the church, on a scale twice as large as the original. Dr. Perowne goes on to remark that the building of a new fabric on a scale that is twice that of the ancient is natural and not unprecedented; but that it is quite unprecedented, because unnatural, in a legend to *imagine* a more ancient fabric that shall be precisely on a

scale half as large as that of the ancient. It is instructive to mark how, relatively to certain theorisings, any touch of *reality* operates like the cock-crow in dispersing ghosts "into thin air."

Of the historical fact of the existence of the ancient Tabernacle at the time of the building of the Temple there is no historical reason—that is, there is no real reason—to doubt, any more than there is reason to doubt the fact of the existence of the Tower of London at this day.

At that time, plainly, it was venerable from supposed great antiquity, and the nation was a practically infallible judge of its antiquity. For of such matters a nation's memory is extremely tenacious, even though it have no such aids to sacred memory as Israel had in Canaan. The only thing we now are inquiring about is the continued *identity* of that Tabernacle as a token or "infallible proof" (τεκμήριον, Acts i. 3) of the continued identity of the nation. And from that time—say, the beginning of Samuel's career—to the time of the alleged exodus marked by the conquering career of Joshua, there was only some three hundred years. That, in the lifetime of a nation which has mind in continuous vivid action, is but a season. The Maoris of New Zealand, though they had no art of writing, have preserved for a longer time the names of the chiefs under whom they first came into their land, and even the names and figures of the canoes which bore them over sea to it. Queen Mary's apartments in Holyrood Palace, Edinburgh, and Luther's Wartzburg Tower, are now as authentically known as the residence of any living sovereign or scholar. And the Tabernacle of Israel was a sacred *palladium*, carrying with it every pious patriotic heart in the nation. The nation all the time, through the anxious and often dark and stormy period of the Judges, had been kept continually wide-awake by what was in effect one long-continued campaign against the heathen, essentially around that very Tabernacle as their sacred banner, "for Jehovah's crown and covenant;" a campaign of which the last battle was not fought until the storming of Jebus, thenceforward Jerusalem, the foremost of the stormers being a nephew of King David, himself by far the greatest captain that Palestine had ever seen. These things were, no doubt, spoken of round many a hearth, and

vividly remembered in many hearts, long before that glorious reign of peace, in which the people sat "every man under his own vine, and every man under his own fig-tree." To the national memory it was but as yesterday that they followed the Ark of God with dry feet across the channel of the Jordan, and the crossing of the Red Sea was in the morning of that day.

The memory of the wilderness was ineffaceable in Israel. It remained in clear distinctness in all their after history. And, indeed, it has remained ineffaceable in the memory of that new Israel which we call the Christian Church. There is not a land nor clime now occupied by Christianity where Christendom, in the very language of its preaching and prayers and sacred songs, does not speak of that wilderness, with its weariness of wandering warfare, and its wonders of mercy and judgment, as a living memory of the past of Christendom itself. But the Tabernacle was not a memory simply of a something in that past. It was distinctively a *testimony*—"The Tabernacle of the Testimony." It *was* in truth a "testimony" remembrancer of clear distinctness.

If the Christian have no need of a Tabernacle before his eyes, inasmuch as he has a Tabernacle imagery of historical theology in his heart, the Israelite came to receive that theology into his heart through seeing it enshrined in the Tabernacle. Leslie, in his *fourth mark*, requires a monumental action. There were monumental actions in connection with the sanctuary services of the Tabernacle. But our present point is, that the Tabernacle itself, in the continued existence of it, was monumental of the exodus day of the erection of it.

At the heart of all were the two stone tables of the law, showing the "immanent action" of law, which (Hooker says) has its seat in the bosom of God. Beside them, in the Ark of the Covenant, there were the pot of manna and Aaron's rod that blossomed. The Holy Place of approach to that Most Holy had symbolism in its Candlestick and Shewbread and Altar of Incense before the Veil, with ordering of sacrifice, and passage of the high priest carrying the blood through the Veil into the Throne of Grace, on which it was a "Covering" (*Kippor*) or Atonement, where Jehovah's glory was enthroned, "over the mercy-seat, between the cherubim." All which

meant the transcendentalism of life, now dwelling among Israel, "hid with Christ in God." And all which goes to show that Israel's memory of redemption was no vague generality, but distinct as the doctrinal articulations of the age of the Councils.

If we would see that the memory was precisely of *that* past, of the deliverance from Egypt, we need only look at *the structure* of the Tabernacle. To begin with—(1) It was a *costly* fabric. The only estimate of its cost now present to our mind is about £250,000. That, for the Israelites of a period so early, was a vast amount. Would it have been forthcoming in Canaan, in the period of the Judges, as a free-will offering from the accumulations which fighting farmers and shepherds might have wrested from bears and lions and men like the Philistines? It *might* have been in the gift of a people newly come from Egypt "with an high hand," laden with Egyptian spoils. (2) *The workmanship*. The rough campaigning, which trained the fingers of David to war, unfitted his soldier subjects for elegant handicraft. Even for the comparatively crude work of the Temple in cedar and stone, workmen had to come from Tyre. The delicate beauty of the Tabernacle work was such that Aholiab and Bezaleel were deemed inspired of God. No doubt the hands which did that work were trained in the textile fabrications of wealthy sumptuous Egypt. (3) *Even the materials* of "purple, scarlet, and fine linen," though they might have been purchased in Sinai from merchants travelling between Euphrates and Nile, were probably little known in Canaan. Perhaps no resident of Canaan had ever so much as *seen* that animal which our version makes a "badger." The "shittim wood" (acacia), slight firm timber, was all of the Sinaitic peninsula. Finally, (4) *the form* of the Tabernacle. To say that it resembled an Egyptian temple is only to say that a Jew resembled a man. There has to be a general similarity of temples which are the residence of a God: the Court, the Reception Room (Holy Place), and the Innermost Shrine (Most Holy Place). The *specific difference* of the Tabernacle ("Dwelling," Heb. *Mishkan*) was its being *A General's Tent*. The flame by night and cloud by day were His banner. When Israel halted, and that smoke or cloud spread over the twelve tribes camped round the dwelling, "His banner over them was Love." This was appropriate for an erection in Sinai by Israel, campaigning under Jehovah, the "man of war" (Ex. xv. 3). It would be meaningless in an erection of any other date.

(3.) *The Passover "Memorial."*

The Tabernacle, with its silent "testimony," like a hieroglyphic *Epistle to the Hebrews*, went on continually exhibiting to them, in a silent picture Gospel (Heb. iv. 2), the real meaning of Israel's religion, the true *way of life* in fellowship with God. The Passover, on the other hand, distinctively the "memorial" festival, brought to their recollection, so as to keep them from forgetting, *the origin of that life* in divine redeeming love. The symbolism, therefore, of the Passover is concentrated (Ex. xii. 27) on THE ONE FACT of *supernatural redemption from a common doom of death on account of sin, through bleeding sacrifice of a lamb offered in obedience to the will of God*. And in connection with that one fact we see in the ordinance that *memorial action*, which Leslie desires to have as one of his four marks, exhibited with most extraordinary impressiveness as well as distinctness. *In this essential respect of impressive distinctness the Passover memorial has not been equalled by anything in the history of mankind*. While the Tabernacle *had* to be built in the wilderness, perhaps the Passover (Amos v. 25, cp. Ex. xii. 24) *could* not be observed with full regularity until the people had entered upon possession of the promised land; and so, in order to see the memorial in the fulness of its impressive distinctness, we ought to picture to ourselves the prescribed observance as taking place in course of Israel's completely settled life in Canaan.

1. In a manner that has no real parallel in history, the Passover was *a nation celebrating its own birthday*. The American 4th of July commemoration is in reality an illustration of contrast. The Declaration of Independence was not, in fact, a people's agonising into birth of nationality, as "a nation born at once" (Isa. lxvi. 8). In form it was only a legal transaction, technically declaratory of transition into a changed political relationship of two sections of one Christian community: the junior protesting notarially that he now was come of age, and would no longer be in subjection of pupillage to the senior. Israel's exodus was strictly *the nation's birth*.

The *people* of Israel had in Egypt been growing toward the

dimensions of a nation, while kept in political non-existence by tyranny, between jealous fear and grasping greed, as by one that "holds a wolf by the ear." But *the nation* had not begun to be in organised political unity of that people. There had not been in its experience any such formative process of moulding and stamping into nationality as has been undergone by the Scottish people in their Wars of Independence, with the 314 pitched battles, along with skirmishes and sieges, as if forging and hammering and welding the community into compact unity of strength, and into invincibly tenacious distinctness of national type. "Farewell, Portugal!" said Wellington, when the Spanish Peninsula was about to be cleared of the French oppressors. Israel as a nation was "born at once" only when Moses had said farewell to Egypt. Previously the nationality was but in the dark womb of a "land of Egypt," which was an "house of bondage."

The fabled Minerva sprang full-armed from the brain of Jove. In reality of fact, Israel's nationality moved "at once" into being when Moses called "Go forward" into the Red Sea.

The Passover was the yearly festival of that momentous birth. *Such* a birthday, the nation could remember as distinctly as the Athenians could remember Marathon, or Wellington's banqueters on the 18th June could remember Waterloo. The *first* and *second marks* of Leslie are, that the alleged event should be in its nature—(1) *visible*, and (2) in a *publicity* real or virtual. The visible publicity of Israel's exodus was carefully provided for. The "first-born" (Ex. iv. 22, 23) of the living God was not smuggled out of Egypt, as if by "underground railway," like a runaway slave. The marching out from Egypt was "with an high hand," in state procession, as a solemn triumph of the "man of war" over Egypt and its gods. *Egypt* will have no monument of this: Germany has no monument of Jena or Austerlitz. But a visible publicity was involved in the very nature of the great event. There was no need of a mummy memorial, nor of a *corpus delicti* of Egyptian suicide recovered from the sea. For a publicity wide open as the day was involved in the very process of Israel's thus moving into manifested being as a nation; with joy-song of salvation on the shore, and gloriously marching on through the wilderness, and victoriously battling with Amalek, and most wondrous covenanting with God. And of the great event, and widely public as the nation's life, the Passover was a suitable "memorial."

2. The observance was *wide as the nation, and deep as the core of the national heart*. It "entered into that which is within the veil" of a people's deepest feelings, and laid strong hold of all that there was of religious patriotism, or patriotic religionism, in a people in which, more than in any other historical people, there was, along with passionate love of nation, domination of an ideal of religious patriotism. It was so, even when Israel was apostate as a prodigal son.

The observance embraced the whole nation. It was death (Ex. xii. 15) for an Israelite to be absent from that confession of Jehovah as His people's life. The bond-servant, who was of the family, as the angels are of the family, though not sons (Heb. i. 5), was to get the Passover along with the family, as being of the seed of Abraham, though a "brother of low degree." The free servant, being his own master, a responsible person, himself a householder, was to eat the Passover with his own household. The nobly considerate law provided that in the case of poor families a number might combine in procuring one Passover lamb. Only, every one had to have, at least, a morsel of the sacrifice; so that among the later Hebrews it was a question how many—twenty?—at the utmost might be feasted with one lamb. It was ordained that there should be no difference between the Israelite by birth and the born alien who was an Israelite by adoption—adoption was free, *i.e.* "by grace." The national observance was thus not only general, but most thoroughly in detail, so that no Israelite should be absent from that communion. The bread was without leaven, to remind them of the haste of the first Passover in Egypt; it was eaten with bitter herbs, that the bitterness of the bondage might not be forgotten. And it was a custom to eat standing, staff in hand, with feet shod, as if ready for exodus departure.

3. The memorial action was *in itself significant*.

The Tabernacle services, though it was the priesthood that carried them on as representing the people, yet had a significance keeping memory alive in the heart of the nation. We observed that there is such a thing as *historical* religious consciousness of a community, thought and feeling extending *protensively* through the generations of time. The Tabernacle services kept alive what may be called a *geographical* consciousness, reaching *extensively* over the regions of space, wherever Israel was. Thus Daniel in Babylon prays with his face toward Jerusalem: his *heart* was there, as Robert Bruce, dying,

wished his heart to be. In the Holy Land itself, pious men and women would, morning and evening, worship their omnipresent Living God (John iv. 19-24) in spirit and in truth, with their heart toward the morning and evening sacrifice at Shiloh or Jerusalem (Ps. cxli. 2, cp. Ps. li. 17). And it may be said that in such ways the whole face of Canaan was ever shining with a sacred significance for the people of God, like the open page of an illuminated gospel of redeeming grace; so that (Ps. lxxviii. 18) the Tabernacle, the visible dwelling (John i. 14) of Jehovah in His glory of forgiving love, was only as the dove-like descending and abiding upon Christ at the Jordan, symbolising that fulness of Godhead which was in Him bodily. Job and his friends, in their deep, theodicean disputations, had open before them Adam's Bible in the natural creation, and the Psalter, too, of nature. And in all that face of Canaan, with its new life of God's redeemed, the Israelite had full before his eyes an ever-living book of Exodus, with an ever new song of deliverance, the "song of Moses and the Lamb." Thus it was in the memory of the great Legislator, and of that redeeming Lamb, that the liberated people ever lived and moved and had their being. The whole of their life was a Passover life.

That sacrifice renewed continually the outflow of the water from the smitten rock, which was to follow them all the way; and, at the same time, showed them (John iv. 10) that Israel's true life was not a common thing, like Jacob's well, which might be drunk of by cattle and by heathens, but a heavenly thing, the covenant gift of God to His chosen. The observance brought that significance of the redemption life, and the source of it, into view, with ever new pointedness of luminous power. It made an ever new beginning, a spring-time in every year (Ex. xii. 2), through all the generations of Israel's life; such as the yearly Nile flood is for the renovation of the life of Egypt, as an oasis in the desert. In this way, in that life of Israel, strict theology will give place to a freedom of sacred song, in which providence becomes (Ps. civ. 30) a continuous creation (*creatio continua*), when (ver. 16) "the trees of the Lord are full of sap" in spring.

4. In the observance there was *the only sacramental address that has ever been given by God for the ritualistic use of man*. We have on record (John xiii.-xvii.) the communion discourses of His Son as a "Minister of the Sanctuary;" and (Matt. iii. 15) we know what was said by Christ at His baptism, so

that, from our own baptism, we may venture to make out a definition of His—such as, “His baptism was a sacrament, wherein the washing with water, along with us (Heb. ii. 9–15), of Him who, being in the bosom of the Father, hath declared Him through the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal His being the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world: the vine into which we are grafted, procuring for us the benefits of the covenant of grace, in terms of His engagement to be His people’s as their surety.” So we may reason it out from the correlation of the Head of the Church to its members. There always is in our baptismal observance that evangelical implication. We thus may endeavour to apply the doctrines of religion to the symbolism of it. It is well worth noting, that the Passover alone has a communion address which is dictated by God.

The Apostolic Church saw Christ in the Passover lamb (1 Cor. v. 7). The Old Testament in the person of John (Matt. xi. 13) had seen the Lamb of God in Christ (John i. 29, cp. Luke ix. 30, 31). And Christ Himself, in the words of institution of the Lord’s Supper, as well as (John vi.) in making His flesh and blood to be the true *wilderness* sustenance of Israel, may seem to have declared the Egyptian paschal lamb to be typical of the Messiah’s atoning death. In our inquiry as to the truth of Bible religion, it is not desirable to put a forced construction upon anything. It is desirable, rather, to restrict ourselves to constructions that force themselves upon the mind: remembering that the external evidence has to be what is *obvious*, so as to reach the common mind of man. We will therefore, to begin with, simply place here, in juxtaposition to the reference to those New Testament articulations, what we have seen to be the import of God’s own commentary (Ex. xii. 26–28) on the Egyptian adumbration,—*Supernatural redemption, from a common doom of death on account of sin through bleeding sacrifice of a lamb, offered in obedience to the will of God.* That was the *idea* at the heart of the Mosaic system, to be continually kept alive in the heart of Israel, as the true secret of the life of Israel as the nation of the redeemed. We will not go into the question of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts viii. 26–34) to see whether the 53rd of Isaiah is not interpreted by “Christ our Passover, sacrificed for us.” (“Sweet James Durham,” Covenanter, has a volume of *sacramental* discourses on Isa. liii., entitled, *The Unsearchable Riches of Christ.*) We only look in passing at that *idea*, placed

in Israel's heart through the Passover lamb, observing the question obviously arising—namely, whether (cp. 1 Pet. i. 11) Moses and Elias (Luke ix. 31, where the Greek for “disease” is *exodus*) may not have seen the realisation of that idea on the cross.

5. *The Passover address was to children, through the fathers of their flesh, from their Father* (Ex. iv. 22, 23) *in heaven.* It came to be a custom in Israel (cp. Luke ii. 41, 42) that the young, at a suitable age (for spiritual *toga virilis*), should, born “children of the covenant,” come to be personally engaged as “children of the Lord.” The spiritual standing of the children of Covenanters, as being within the covenant *by birth—federati*, had from the earliest beginning (Rom. iv. 9) been intimated in the circumcision of infants. What we now note is (cp. John xxi. 15) how God provided, as the most precious thing in His gift of instruction, that *that idea* of supernatural redemption should be rooted in the heart of every Israelite, in the deepest soil of natural affections, brought into the dominion of grace.

It is of some importance to observe, with reference to the purpose of a memorial institution, that *the Passover is being observed at this day.* It is being observed both by Christians and by the Israel that is according to the flesh.

The *Christian Passover* has for believers a great wealth of sacred significance. It makes that divine definition of the true idea or significance of the Passover to be perpetually shining in the Christian soul as a lamp of God in the Holy Place, causing the Christians walking with God to be a Passover life (Ex. xx. 2); as when Hedley Vicars resolved to “live as a man that has been redeemed.” But our present observation is, that though Christians should in fact not be warranted in so transferring the sacramental meaning of the Passover (“Moses unveiled”), nevertheless they are perpetuating the memory of Israel's redemption from Egypt, and strikingly illustrating the stable continuity of that historical consciousness, which we have noted as one of the presumptive evidences of this religion, in that it is suggestive of an abiding *principle* of unity remaining changeless in the changing generations of men.

A *Hebrew Passover* at this day is very pathetically suggestive. It is one of the many things, in connection with the most interesting of all peoples, which go to make the interest painful. The endeavour to maintain the historical position of God's *true* Israel always results in a painfully vivid presentation of the *emptiness* of the pretension ; as if, after sunrise, a pale moon had pretended to "rule the day." The name that thus is suggested to the observer is not Israel, but *Ichabod*. For what we see, in every respect, is not the glory, but "the glory is departed." Thus (1) this observance is *not in* the *Canaan* land of predestined observance (Ex. xii. 28). And (2) especially, *it has not the sacrifice* (cp. Dan. ix. 27). The sacrifice really *is* the Passover ; so that where the sacrifice is not, a Passover is really nothing. But all the more striking is the monumental evidence on this account. It is as if *the dead* had continued to commemorate *that* one thing ; or, as if the Egyptian mummies had commemorated the midnight cry which went through Egypt, but of which the memory was stifled among the living. Christians hope that Israel shall be led to give a New Testament rendering of the great song, "I will give thanks unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously : the horse and its rider hath He cast into the sea" (Ex. xv.). It was a Hebrew that saw the glorious vision (Rev. vii.) of a ransomed Israel in the same completed rest with others of mankind who have known what it is to "labour and be heavy laden."

In view of that monument, the question rises, Is it *possible* that the exodus should not have been an historical reality ? And the answer of the monumental guidance is—No ; for it is not possible that, at any time since the age of Moses, the Passover (*professing* to have been set on foot in that age) should have *begun* to be observed ; and in the age of Moses it could not have begun to be observed if the exodus had not been a real historical event. The ulterior question, Was not the exodus truly supernatural, has to be considered in connection with the mission of Moses and the plagues on Egypt.

It is important for our purpose to have in view the fact, that *the historical reality of the exodus is demonstrable irrespect-*

ively of the spiritual significance of the event, and as such is now one of the accepted facts of general history of the world. This indicates a very considerable advance, not only since Leslie's time, but within our own memory. Within our memory there was among unbelievers a vague impression that relatively to Mosaism there is *nothing* really historical ; that all is only a sort of day-dream of Hebrew religious tradition. Moses to some minds was fabulous as Numa, or Menes, or Prester John. It was held that *he could not write*, since the art of writing was not yet invented in his time, which, of course, was a master argument against the Pentateuch. A Biblian scholar so distinguished and so recent as Moses Stuart (*Introduction to the Old Testament*) is found labouring to *prove* the antiquity of writing, by such precarious evidence as that of the "fatal tablets" in the *Iphigenia at Aulis*.

Schliemann has found, among the ruins of Troy, proof that writing must have been known a thousand years before the famous siege. Excavation in the Euphrates Valley has brought to light actual writing that must have been executed before Abraham's time. Writing of like antiquity has been found on Egyptian monuments. And a crown is put on the demonstration by the argument (Ewald) from the use of words for *write*, *pen*, *ink*; in the Semitic tongues, showing that the art of writing with pen in ink must have been practised by the Shemites when they were all "of one speech and one tongue" (see further on : on *Mosaic Origines*). It is difficult to convey to those whose memory does not go back to Moses Stuart's argumentations an adequate conception of the very great historical advances thus implied. The effect upon the theorisings of ignorance has been as if a jet of cold had entered a chamber filled with vapour. The effect as regards Bible is ever confirmation ! Real facts are always found its friends, though Pharaoh's butler may perhaps forget.

(4.) *The call and sending of Moses.*

The nation, now alive before our eyes, leads us back to the Tabernacle, erected for a "testimony" in the wilderness. Before that, we find the Passover was instituted in Egypt as

a "memorial" of the redemption for all generations. And now, still further back, we shall trace the great movement to *its beginning, in the preparation and qualification of the Mediator*, through whom God "sent redemption to His folk."

Israel's religion is here the fact that has to be accounted for. And theorists have accounted for it by something in the natural constitution of Israel; a *natural religiousness* peculiar to the Semitic peoples in general, and to the seed of Abraham in especial (see above, Bk. I. chap. i. sec. 3, p. 71). Paul did not find it so. He (Rom. ii., iii.) found the Israelites condemned by their own law; so that every mouth might be shut, and all alike might be guilty before God. Christ did not find it so, when He came as their Messiah, and they slew the Prince of life. *They* spoke of being Abraham's children, but *He* spoke of a very different parentage (John viii. 44) as appearing in their life. And now we shall see how it was in the beginning of their career as a nation, according to the representation of that history which the theorists make into a dream. If it was a dream, it was the dream of *the nation*. What was the nation's dream about its own past?

1. *Even when they were in the first enjoyment of the great deliverance, they tempted the deliverer ten times*, so that the whole generation of those who left Egypt perished in the wilderness. Moses was harassed and trampled on by their insolent ingratitude of coarse worldliness, as no other man had ever been (this is the real meaning of what is said about his "meekness" in Num. xii. 3—it means down-trodden, "sat upon"). In Egypt he found in them, not a transcendentalism of heroic religiousness, that would account for a great movement into free nationality, to be followed by a wondrous, heroic, national history; but an abject slavishness of sensuality and timid selfishness, such as to show that the whole of that movement was *against the grain* of their natural affections, and that a true moral wonder of the exodus was *their* having moved in it. It was the movement of a rising and advancing tide, opposed by the ruggedness and gravitation of the earth. It is not the sullen earth, with dead weight of resistance in her heart, and manifold oppositions of that ruggedness on her surface, that causes the movement of the sea. It is caused by impulsive and regula-

tive power of an influence extramundane and supramundane; the influence of a heavenly orb of light, moving and controlling, onward and upward, to the predestined end, this turbulent waste of waters, all reluctant in impurity. The Israel which Moses led out of Egypt certainly did not *show* a natural religiousness that would account for the ostensible revelation of God through Moses, and the prophets, and the apostles, and Christ.

2. *They themselves never imagined that the religion of Jehovah was natural on their part.* They might be or not be true to it, they might love it or hate it, adhere to it loyally or apostatise from it basely. But, though they should fall away into pollutions of heathenism, or be as perfect in Mosaism as the Pharisee in the temple, they never once dreamed of thinking that Jehovahism was a thing of earth, which had sprung up of itself in the Israelitish nature; as the ancient Athenians imagined that their ancestors had sprung out of their Attic soil. And precisely *those* Israelites, in whom the Israelitish religion was highest, were always the furthest away from the imagination of its having originated in anything but real historical supernatural revelation of God. Moses and Samuel, David and Isaiah and John Baptist, Paul and Peter and John the Divine, Jesus of Nazareth—all these held views which are of a different world from the notion of a merely deistical religion of nature. Is it not astonishing that *they* should have been so completely mistaken about their own religion, while it is so well known about by men who avowedly have no personal experience of any religion?

3. *Naturalism has never been believed in among those in whom religion was a life.* Abraham, the father of them which believe, was thus far like other religionists, that he was not a deist (as indeed Cain was not). "He believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness," does not mean that he was "commended," or got a first prize for natural theology. When he left Mesopotamia, and travelled westward till he became the first of Hebrews ("crossers") by crossing Jordan into Canaan, he was not merely a fortune-hunter vaguely trusting Providence; much less was he wandering misdirected like a prodigal, or aimless like a maniac. *He obeyed a distinct supernatural call of God.* This is the essence of what he did.

He, and Isaac and Jacob after him, believed in a supernatural revelation, of an express divine covenant with a seal; in a positive promise, of a seed from the barren womb, of possession of the land they were strangers in, and of a blessing through them for all the families of the earth. *That* belief was their life. The God in whom they trusted was not only the Almighty Creator of the worlds and the righteous Judge of all the earth, but the Author of a new creation, who calls things which are not as things that are, and provides a lamb for the burnt-sacrifice in place of the doomed life of Abraham's seed.

That is the God who appeared to Moses "in the Bush." The one question for us in connection with that Bush is only as to *the supernatural*. We take no interest in the natural history of the acacia. Stories of snake-charmers and of workers of other natural wonders are nothing to us more than tales of "travels in the East"—the only question is, whether Abraham's God Almighty was pointing in the serpent rod with instruction and command, and whether Isaac's Creator and Redeemer was here again, in the merciful restoration of the leprous hand, as one who might employ a creature so helpless and impure as Israel to be the organ of His revelation and His purifying righteousness for mankind. Moses is nothing to us except as prime minister of Jehovah in a work of supernatural mercy and judgment.

(1.) *He is at the beginning of a new creative epoch in the history of Abrahamites*, which is to be completely a religious history, though with temporal accompaniments. Hitherto, God has been dealing with the chosen race—sporadically—individually, or in families and tribes, through visitation of angels or otherwise, keeping alive a supernatural religion in the line of promise. But now that simple elementary instruction of life will no longer suffice. Israel has grown into the numbers of a nation. And for the purposes of God, and with a special reference to Canaan as the land of covenant promise to the fathers, that people has to be called and organised into distinctly manifested being *as a nation*; and consecrated—collectively, in corporate unity of nationalism—to the living covenant God, with a constitution suitable to the purpose of the consecration. Such, generally, is the

existing state of things, as it may have been apprehended by Moses himself, long brooding upon such matters in that wilderness. And we now have to consider whether, in that state of things, *natural religiousness in Moses* would account for *what follows* upon the vision of the Bush.

We need raise no question about his being naturally religious in a high degree. We will suppose that he is accustomed, in his solitary shepherding, to "follow nature up to nature's God." From Gen. i. we may conclude that *he* is somehow kept from what appears to be the "natural" tendency of *other* men's religiousness, namely, to make Nature herself into God, and thus to lose God in nature. That wild nature, in which he lives and moves and has his being, may thus be to him as a holy temple of the unseen Eternal. Every tree of the desert may to him be as a many branched candlestick of revelation in a sanctuary; and every shrub, a bush that burneth and is not consumed, the supernatural glowing and shining through natural, in a localised Omnipresence of Him who "filleteth all in all." Then, as it appears in Ex. xv. that he is by nature a poet, great and true, he may translate his meditation into a psalm of nature, or weave it into a theosophical "Hymn of the Bush." And that sacred song he may choose to associate with some one particular bush, which happens to be the one that flashed upon his heart with its wondrous wealth of blossoms as of glowing gold in light. For poets love to individualise: witness—"Bird of the wilderness," "Hail, beauteous stranger of the grove," and "Wee, modest, crimson-tippèd flower."

But that by nature evaporates in song. And we have to do with a historical fact—namely, that Moses on this occasion did not swoon away into day-dreaming, nor lose himself in reverie, about the divine Omnipresence, like an Indian mystic sitting forty years lost in reflection, but *was directed and impelled to prompt immediate action*, of great and arduous enterprise, seemingly hopeless in difficulty, certainly full of labour and peril. A runaway slave, who has for forty years been learning his nothingness among the vast primary forces of nature in those solitudes, and perhaps receiving lessons in "meekness" from Zipporah, is not likely, now that he is long past the term of threescore years and ten

(Ps. xc. is "Of Moses"), to be precipitated into such an enterprise by the mere inward impulse of his own nature. What we might expect from his nature is, *the hesitation, reluctance, apparently aversion* which the historian ascribes to him. Natural religiousness does not, let us hope, make a man to be a madman or an idiot. And Moses was certainly neither imbecile nor insane. His intellectual eye was not dimmed, while his bodily force was not abated. In him there was no decay of one of the most powerful minds ever given to a man by the Creator. The great comprehensive constitution, which now underlies the life of the civilised nations of Christendom, and which originated in that mind, in every detail as clear, distinct in firmness as coinage of a republic in its robust virtuous youth, bears witness at this hour to the then existing affluent vigour of his faculties. What *he* undertook, *he must have seen good cause* to undertake.

Accordingly, the history shows that cause. Along with the flame there was a *voice*, articulate-speaking. The voice, in what it said, was precisely fitted to impel as well as to guide into the enterprise a man *who seriously believed in God*, as unquestionably Moses did, and must have done, in so far as he was naturally religious. But in that voice *the thing* is *supernatural* communication of God's mind. And here again we are reminded of what is most painfully offensive on the part of certain theorists—namely, an apparently *complete absence of feeling in relation to veracity*.

In our ordinary experience it is not a thing of course that a man, who even is not naturally religious, shall speak or think a lie about a plain matter within his personal knowledge. We are familiar with cases of men, making no profession of religion, who would rather die—like Regulus—than be untrue in such a matter if it be of serious trust. But it seems to be the esoteric principle of certain schools, that *ordinarily*, in the *normal* case, *the great and lofty human souls*, the leaders of the elect of humanity in what ostensibly is its highest career, shall be *false* men, in relation to God and their fellows; and shall have *played false* at the supremely testing crisis, both of their outgoing activity and of their own inward formative experience. *Paul's* "deceivers and being deceived," waxing worse and worse, were "evil men and

seducers," the most infamous of mankind, like the abominable *göetes* of heathenism. The suggestion, that *lying* is to be expected in a case like that of Moses, is a libel upon our fallen humanity, to say nothing of God, the Creator and Redeemer of mankind. And yet, short of the suggestion that Moses was a *deliberate liar*, in saying that *he heard that voice* from the Bush, *speaking those words*, the only alternative is the admission that he received from the Burning Bush a distinct supernatural revelation.

The story of the Bush must have originated with Moses, as that of the Damascus appearance did with Paul, and that of the Transfiguration did with Peter, James, and John. If any one of these stories be true, the others are thereby shown to be likely. For, while the religion in all the three cases was in effect the same, the circumstances were of the same character, as constituting a crisis in the history of the religion, which called for some extraordinary communication of supporting impulse to the men upon whom depended its fortunes under God. And in all the three cases the story is likely, *if there be in the universe any such thing as a supernatural redemption*. But at present the question is not as to *that thing*. It is as to *these men*—whom we know. Is it likely that *these men*—*such men*—*should deliberately lie*, in the name of God, for the creation of a delusion most toilsome and perilous to themselves? Here is the first difficulty in the story of the Burning Bush for those who do not take the simple and straightforward course of believing that Moses, like an honest man, told the truth about this matter,—a matter about which he must have perfectly well known the truth. But passing from this point,—

(2.) We will now suppose that in some way Moses has made up his mind to venture on that enterprise.

That is hardly the beginning of a step toward the enterprise, even in his mind. He can hardly think of taking real action, even one step toward Egypt, unless he obtain some assurance as to *means of success* in the enterprise, or at least means of trying to succeed. According to the history, he *seeks* the required assurance from God, and obtains it—namely, in the miracles of the staff and the serpent. The staff—in the hand of a "schoolmaster" like Moses, Gal. iii.—is a symbol of instruction with command (cp. Matt. xix. 28). The hand in what occurs to it may show us "judgment and mercy"—

chastisement or blessing. The leprosy and the serpent form, pictures of impure helplessness and wickedness, may mean Israel as well as Egypt. But the symbolism is a side matter, not affecting our inquiry. What lies direct in our way is the "sign," the seal, the sensible attestation of the mission of Moses, or visible "manifestation" of the "power and coming" of Jehovah. *If those signs were wrought before Israel*, then we can understand what follows in the action of the Israelites. That action on their part implies confidence in the real presence of God the Redeemer—witness the pathetic description of this manner of owning the first miracle:—they bowed their head and worshipped, saying that the Lord hath visited His people. But here again it is suggested that the story is a lie. And now the question rises, Supposing Moses to be such a knave as to be willing to lie in such a matter and manner—*Can he be such a fool as to expect, with such lies, to bring Israel out of Egypt?* "Lie" is a short word, and has the further good quality of saying what is meant here, namely, deliberate deception by word or action. If any one prefer vaguer words, "delusion," "accommodation," the *nature of the thing* remains the same.

(3.) *For influencing the Israelites, if the miracles of the leprous hand and serpent staff were unreal, then Moses had really nothing to rely upon but the story or song of the Bush.* Could he expect, through cantilation of that theosophical hymn—perhaps with accompaniment of Aaron on the harp—to work upon their feelings so as to raise them into a frame of such religious exaltation that they would trust him and follow him as a messenger of God? Perhaps he might expect some assistance from the eloquence of Aaron, who seems to have become known as "the Hebrew"—it may be, renowned for his patriotism, like Cedric "the Saxon." But every step we take with these "might be's," shows more and more clearly that here too *the direction* in which we are going is apparently wrong; that the right direction is again the straightforward one of believing that Moses is a man of sense, and that his testing miracles are real.

He was not a man *who could delude himself* into expecting that the down-trodden slaves, accustomed to carry burdens and fear the lash, would be transfigured into heroes such that the giant pride and greed of Egypt's power would quail and pall before them, by a wanderer from the wilderness, with a cantilation about a bush, and an accompaniment of fraternal

eloquence, like that of an harper harping on his harp. Such was not his experience of slave Israel forty years before (Ex. ii. 11-15). Tradition makes him to have been in his early life a military leader of no small renown, in expeditions in which he may have really earned the name (Acts vii. 22) of being mighty in "deed" as well as "word." His whole unquestionable work bears witness that he must have been a superlative administrator, supremely great as a man of affairs. The Jews are everywhere the best men of business in the world, Israelites are high in the central administration of the Christian empires. For their mind is made by Moses, the miraculous "man of business." And though he should have had no veteran experience nor far from common genius, he at least had an ordinary gift of reason, with some perception of the needfulness, in the business of life, of a certain proportion of means to ends. And any one who was not either insane or idiotic could have seen at a glance that he and his brother, going upon such an enterprise as we have imagined, would have been instantly knocked on the head by the Egyptians as disturbers, or locked up as aged maniacs; if not stoned by the Israelites in their bitterness of soul against impostors mocking at an enslaved people's misery.

The most perfervid Scot, when he thinks of a "skilful Bruce to rule the fight," will not for a moment imagine that that king, so brave and wise, approached to Moses in respect of the kingly governing faculty of skill to lead mankind. But wise King Robert had *some* perception of the due proportion of means to end; so that, for instance, when his hot blood impelled him to break the thick bull head of Henry Bohun, his national frugality rebuked him for having "spoiled his good axe" in the demolition of a blockhead. But suppose that he had gone out in front of his "Scots wha hae" to battle, not against one empty-headed boaster, but against all "proud Edward's power;" and that he had armed himself, not even with his "good axe," but only with a song, say, about a pretended miracle of healing and a hazel wand away at St. Fillans' Well. A manner of looking at the subject that leads on to such absurdities is not historical criticism, unless criticism means want of sense. Horace was a keen critic of literary art. And he pronounced that artist hopelessly doomed to failure who should perpetrate such *incongruity* as beginning a picture or statue with the nobly beautiful bust of a goddess

to finish it off with the hideously misplaced extremities of a fish. We may look at the Bible as a work of art. The exodus is a noble epic of redemption, all the finer on account of a certain ballad-like simplicity in its grandeur. And the so-called critic is a blind man, who, in place of the greatness of the Moses of the history, will put that fatuous incongruity of imbecile unreason at the crisis of his supreme resolve.

But, further, though the force of imbecility should carry Moses down to Egypt, it will not carry Israel up from Egypt. It is wicked to be ready to believe in lies, on the part of one like Moses, who is another name for Moral Law. But the very shock of that offence to right feeling of clean-hearted men, occasioned by imputation of vileness to what is pure and high, may have the evil effect of distracting our attention from the *stupidity* of the criticism so offending. Irrespectively of the moral offensiveness of such criticism, imputation of mean unverity to men like Moses and Paul—and not always stopping short of a greater than they—it is important to observe the *intellectual* character of that to which men are driven *by not believing this history*. It is crass unreason to make *mere lies* to have been the *creative power* in such a movement as the exodus.

Campbell, in his *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, has a discussion of the question, "Why nonsense so often passes undetected?" In the present case the reason probably is, that men do not really consider what is *the thing* in question. Suppose that *lies* could serve as a seed of the kingdom of God among men, in the old dispensation, and consequently in Christendom, *Could lies inflict the plagues of Egypt*, so as to open Israel's way to the Red Sea, and through it? *Could lies* even move them to "go forward" into the sea?

(4.) The history goes on to say that in Egypt *the reality of the miracle-working power was thoroughly tested and proved*.

It broke the stubborn pride of a despot who was worshipped as a god. And this was not until after his idolising proud heathen empire had been terrified into reclamation against their man-god for his obduracy. The heathen resources of supernaturalism, whatever they may have been, were exhausted in a vain opposition. Such is the representation in the history. It is quite completely congruous and coherent. It is

a real account of what took place. It is impossible to give any other real account of the exodus. To speak about day-dreams is not even to try to account for this *origin of Israel's nationality*. To say that Moses lied, is to refuse to tell how he came to be the author of a new creation of human life in that monumental people. It seems to be imagined, in a puzzle-headed way, that there is congruity, that the representation will hang together if the *works* be made to lie as well as the words. That will make a story of a falsetto exodus. But two blacks do not make a white. A falsetto exodus is *not the thing* that has to be accounted for. What has to be accounted for is the *fact of an historical exodus*. It is a *real* exodus that we have seen at the beginning of Israel's history. And to imagine an unreal cause, for the purpose of explaining a real history, is to resolve not to understand the history, and to disbelieve the historical fact. It is to invent a history that may serve as a companion piece to the Moses we have invented, in order to make a place for *falsetto* miracles which we have imagined. This fable, which is *ours* only, is not even "cunningly devised." It is clumsy workmanship. Our fancy picture is a failure, even as a work of art, having in it the *incongruity* of a solid historical effect, resulting from a falsetto imaginary cause.

Can any rational being imagine that Israel and Egypt were so moved by Mosaic lies about miracles as if they had been real mighty works of Jehovah? Achilles, on the fiery edge of battle, can turn the raging tide of it with his battle-cry, sending panic terrors through the Trojan host, and revived courage through the Achæan. And Patroclus, disguised in the armour of that hero, may create a momentary feeling by raising a war-cry in imitation of his voice. But his career of success in the deception will be short-lived. The ass may be disguised by a lion skin, but the ass's bray is not the lion's roar; as theatrical rattling of a drum is not the true terrible thundering of a god. And the impression made on Egypt, as well as on Israel, reaching the heart and soul, with profound abiding operative force of conviction, such as to make way for the exodus departure, *cannot* be accounted for — there can be no real coherent story of the exodus, but only a statue upon one broken leg — except on the supposition of real supernatural wonders of Omnipotence.

The plagues are the only possible explanation of the departure. Of course, no mere delusion of Israel or of Egypt would account for the death of the first-born, the work of salvation, and of death in the Red Sea, the manna from heaven, the water from the rock, the ten words of God on the tables of stone. But we now are speaking only of the original impulse, represented by the entrance of Moses upon his campaign. The detailed works are, as far as they can be traced, *in the line* of nature. Some of them, if we had known them only in isolation, might have been susceptible of explanation without supposing extraordinary supernaturalism (cp. chap. i. sec. 4). That is in keeping with what we observed in the character of the Gospel miracles. In the one case, as in the other, the "minor" works fall to be considered in the light of the "greater," and all have to be seen in their vital relation to *the* great work of supernatural redemption, through the wonder of divine redeeming grace and truth. We must remember also that "the finger of God" was made manifest by circumstances which were accessory to the actual work, such as *the prediction* of the earlier miracles, going before the particular works with solemn formality, so that the sight of a frog in his bed-chamber may have been of terrific significance to the man-god of Egypt, as the handwriting on the wall was to Belshazzar and his lords. The prediction was thus itself a miracle, being a forecast of the incalculable. And when miracle is once established, shown to be operative in the campaign, it is not rational to expect the same careful demonstration of the supernaturalism, in every detail of what has already been shown to be a *régime* of supernaturalism.

The dream-theory is *no* real "theory." It is not a key that opens the door to comprehension of the facts. It breaks in the lock, and has to be flung away as worse than useless brass. So we are driven upon the *Bible* "theory" of that historical fact,—a theory which is a song of joyful tidings to all peoples (Ps. ciii. 7), namely, that Abraham's God Almighty sent redemption to His folk, and that, on His conquering way of their deliverance, He "made known His ways unto Moses, His works unto the children of Israel."

‡

SEC. 3. *Continuation: the Mosaic Origins.*

The suggestion of Bishop Butler, that the Bible is shown to be true by being a history of the world as God's world,

has in it a boldness of simple greatness like Butler himself. Regarding those beginnings which are characteristic of the Mosaic Scriptures as represented by the recurring *formula*, "the book of the generations," etc., it is not necessary for us to inquire beyond the question, how they serve the purpose of completing a *real view* of the world as appearing in the Scriptures,—that is, of the world as appearing historically, under the power of God, and also (without knowing it) under His instructive guidance. The "endings," or "last things," as represented, *e.g.*, by the apocalyptic predictions of John and others, have a similar bearing on the Bible system, relatively to the question whether it gives a real view. They may thus be made subservient to the purpose of Apologetics, in so far as they go to show that the Bible does give a real view, which is completed by their *prospective* exhibition of the future. The Mosaic *Origines*, "Beginnings," or First Things, are a *retrospective* exhibition of the past. And the question for us at present is, whether in that way of retrospect of the past they really serve, in the same manner as the prospective exhibition of the picture, toward completeness of the Bible, in its effect of giving a real view of the world.

That question is more significantly important in relation to Apologetics and the truth of religion than may appear at first sight. The doctrine of gravitation, for instance, is established, as constituting a true theory of science, simply by its giving a real view of the facts open to observation in the mechanical universe,—by its enabling us to see those facts as a system, to comprehend them as one whole. And the doctrine, once it is thus established, remains established, immovable as that mechanical system itself. Though gravitation should be found resolvable into some more general force or law, a genus under which electricity and light shall take rank as co-ordinate species along with gravitation, that would not make the Newtonian system of the stars to be untrue. It would only show that the Newtonian system of the stars is but one province of a more comprehensive empire of nature, in which are to be included other provinces, of electricity and light; which, consequently, will be seen to have a heretofore unsuspected imperialism of common principles pervading their

otherwise separate domains. So, if the Bible give a real view of the world, that view will remain unmoved, as a real view of the world, though at some future time there should come into men's possession a more comprehensive view, which will embrace the Bible view of the world in a hitherto unknown divine imperial system of the universe.

In the meantime, the fact of the Bible's giving a real view of the world, may be important as bearing on the question of the truth of religion, or, of the divinity of Bible religion. It may, for instance, at the very outset serve an important purpose by warranting a pressure of the testing question in relation to doctrines which offer themselves in place of the Bible doctrine. Do *they* give a real view of the world, or help toward the attainment of such a view? Thus, as to the doctrine of human descent from "a hairy quadruped," perhaps living in trees. We need not inquire whether that doctrine accounts for the circumstance of man's being a hairless biped, gifted with reason, and worshipping God in temples. For the doctrine is seen to be a mere fatuity as soon as we think of the testing question, Would the supposed truth of this doctrine tend to help us toward a real view of the world? Manifestly, it would only tend to make such a view hopelessly unattainable. Pantheism, in like manner, is, when tested by that question, found wanting; because it not only gives no real view, but would make impossible a real view of the world as containing free will, personality, moral agency. Similarly, Deism is thrown out; because its view of the world excludes the fact, that in man's actual world a leading part has always been played by supernatural revelation. And Socinianism is thrown out by its excluding from view the great fact of man's ruin by sin, and his need of redemption.

This is a practical form of the process which logicians call *abscissio infiniti*. Cutting off one claimant after another until only one remains, it establishes for that remaining one a presumption of right to be received as the legitimate one. Such a presumption can be established for the Bible on the ground of the Mosaic *Origines*. These beginnings, and these only, as an exhibition of what may be described as the background of history, do really serve the purpose of completing a real view of the world, historically regarded. There never

has appeared among mankind any other exhibition of background that would serve in place of that, to complete a real view of the historical world. And, especially when we consider the primæval antiquity of the Mosaic Scriptures, the simple fact of *their* thus accomplishing what mankind have otherwise failed to accomplish, is unquestionably fitted to countenance the belief that the Scriptures thus far must needs be the record of a supernatural revelation.

It is not necessary, for defence of the divinity of the religion, to maintain that everything in the Scriptures was at first revealed supernaturally. But it is well to observe that things in those beginnings may be of such a nature that, more or less, they *must* have been so revealed at the first. Supposing, for instance, that the Mosaic account of creation is substantially correct, and that it was naturally impossible for the author of that account to obtain the correct information which it gives, the obvious inference is, that he received it supernaturally. The inference becomes corroborated if we find that his account of the fall, the first estate of man, and the unity of mankind, is in full keeping with later ascertainments about these matters, while it is the only primitive account of them found among mankind that is really clear, coherent, and not manifestly corrupted with untruth, nor partial through incompleteness. And a yet further corroboration may conceivably be derivable from the Mosaic account of the Flood, the distribution of nations, and the Babel confusion and dispersion. These things, of catholic-human interest, and of a nature to leave traces behind them, may conceivably now be traceable through traditions and other monuments, so far as to show that they were not quite buried beyond possibility of being known to man,—while it may nevertheless be clear, or morally certain, or most likely, that *that* knowledge of them which appears in the Mosaic beginnings, must have been derived, more or less, from supernatural revelation.

And irrespectively of a supposed revelation of those matters, the way and manner of their appearance in the Mosaic Origines may constitute an external evidence of the truth of Bible religion, by going to show that there must have been at least a “special” providence in the provision and conservation of this instruction for mankind. Those who are acquainted with heathen cosmogonies and other endeavours to give a view of Origines, are aware that even representations of this and that, which in themselves are not inaccurate, are made either useless or positively misleading through being misplaced,

or not rightly set, in relation to the system of things as a whole. The tradition, for instance, of a deluge, which may be regarded as catholic-human in respect of its hold upon the memory of the race, is yet so alloyed with sectarian infusion of local and national prepossessions, that the literal facts can be learned only from a comprehensive induction and comparison of accounts far beyond the power of any primitive historian; and also and especially, the whole matter is darkened relatively to moral instructiveness, through total or partial oblivion of the moral or spiritual causes of a physical catastrophe so dire. The Mosaic Origines, on the other hand, place the moral and spiritual *rationale* of the history always duly in the heart of the narration. At the same time they give the external history in a catholic-human form, evidently without alloy of prepossession, local or national. They thus give a really complete account of those outstanding main matters of man's primæval history; and that, an account whose likelihood is ever becoming more manifest in the advancing light of knowledge from the study of other sources. The mere avoidance of blunders, not recognisable as such at the time, but sure to be detected at a later time, is, in such a book as Genesis, very remarkable. But beyond this negative, which is not without cogency, relatively to the argument now in view, the positive instruction, so fairly adequate in amount, and so precisely fit in quality or kind, for the presumable purpose of those Origines, to be the background of a view of God's dealings with the world, has in it a clear light of evidence as well as of information,—a light which is far from unimportant as a contribution to a system of circumstantial evidence.

Scholars have found in the Mosaic Scriptures themselves traces of the previous existence of materials, whether in writing or in oral tradition, from which the Mosaic accounts may have been more or less derived. The use of such materials, where practicable, in the authorship of Scriptures, is made familiar to us by what we find in later Scriptures of the New Testament (cp. Luke i. 1-4) as well as the Old; while it is consistent with the general character and purpose of Scripture, as a work of man for men. And the actual employment of such previously-existing materials is fitted to corroborate our confidence in the trustworthiness of the history, by showing that *in the preparation of it there was a use of the ordinary means available for securing accuracy* in the details of what is here recorded.

Recent excavations in the Euphrates valley, and a comparative study of other extant memorials of primæval antiquity, have carried men, on converging lines of antiquarian research, far back into the times of those Origines themselves. Some very ancient written inscriptions have exhibited a surprisingly large extent of coincidence with the Mosaic accounts, even of creation, and perhaps more strikingly of the Flood. But specific ascertainments made in that manner, with reference to matters of such remote obscurity, may well in the first instance give occasion to questions of doubtful disputation as to the harmony of Gentile traditions with the Scriptures. These questions it may be impossible to answer satisfactorily in our present state of knowledge. The Gentile tradition may not now be rightly understood. Or it may have become corrupted before it assumed the form in which it reaches us. Or it may have been more or less inaccurate from the hour of its birth. But the very existence of such traditions, and of other sources of real information regarding that primæval past, serves a good purpose in relation to the question as to the truth of religion, by showing that *here, too, we are not in a mere dreamland of popular imagination ; but are, though in dim light, really on historic ground.*

In order to right and profitable use of these Origines, it is necessary to keep in view the real Mosaic purpose of them, namely, introduction to the great history of Israel's redemption from Egypt and consecration for Canaan ; so that it has been said that Genesis gives a history of the old creation, while Exodus is the history of a new creation superinduced upon the old ; and it may be said that Genesis gives a view of the world as containing the Church, while the Pentateuch as a whole exhibits the creative epoch of the Church as God's kingdom in the world. The Origines, in order to be rightly construed, have to be contemplated in the light of the purpose thus implied. A statement of fact may be well fitted for that purpose, though it should have in it little or nothing to meet the curiosity of mere antiquarianism, or of natural history or science.

Thus, the question which of late years has been burning again, whether one species may not have produced a different species of individuals by evolution, as an individual produces the same species of individual by generation, may, by the scriptural historian, have been left undetermined ; because

the purpose of his writing is served by his simply intimating the *fact* of creation of all things, their origination by the action of divine free will; and the purpose might be frustrated rather than forwarded by his dogmatising as to *the way and manner* of that origination by creative will,—whether mediately (as in the generation of individual bodies) or immediately (as in the creation of souls).

Again, it is conceivable that Scripture, for its own purpose, should employ material which is good for that purpose, though for some other purposes it should not be good. Thus, for the purpose of Scripture a genealogy may be good, as showing the true lineage of the seed of promise. And for that purpose the Scripture may give the whole genealogy, which is correct in its representation of that lineage, though in some other respects, not affecting the purpose of the Scripture use of it, it should not be correct. For the purpose of Scripture it may be important to copy into it the genealogy in full; so that the Scriptures may say to mankind, regarding that lineage—"Here it is proved *by your own records*, in witness whereof we have copied this genealogy *in full*."

Perplexities which may arise from such things to the student of Scripture have to be borne with. They are in keeping with the general character and intention of the scriptural instruction. Here, again, we remember the Teacher who is meek and lowly in heart is at the same time wise, and does not always make everything clear to His pupils; and if on that account there be some who find fault, He knows that, and has another purpose to serve, which requires that (Ps. xviii. 26) He should show Himself "froward to froward." The perplexities are thus a discipline for believers, and a trial for all.

(1.) *Creation.*

1. As to *the fact of creation*. Recent discussions have done much to obscure the main fact as to this Mosaic Beginning—namely, that it has done to mankind the vast service of *establishing a real belief in creation*, origination by divine free will, as an historical matter of fact. A working

belief in the governing intelligence, the purposing free agency of the living God Almighty, as the true cause of the origin of the world, is, to human beings, a great attainment, of inestimable importance in itself. It also serves as the strong foundation of a solid belief in providence, all-powerful as well as good and wise, and in redemption as a new creation by God's word. *That great attainment has been made possible for mankind through the Mosaic record of creation, and it has been secured for mankind through no other means.* Men, without that aid, have been found to fall into nature-worship, confounding God with the world, and running into multitudinous polluting degradations of polytheism. At the last, they are found reduced to a stark naturalism of belief, whether atomistic or pantheistic, which makes man to be regarded as only a *thing*, it may be at one pole of a *thing* which at the other pole is called God; so that really for him there is no living God, and in him there is no rational soul. Attempts to escape from this ruinous degradation have proved to be vain for him, as it would be vain for an eagle to endeavour to soar without an atmosphere. Moses has furnished the atmosphere, while showing the stars in the firmament, and earth in the sunlight; and while for the human soul God "filleteth all in all," and "worketh all in all," men through his writing have been enabled really to "believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." Whence had *he* "this wisdom"? Who disclosed to this "babe" what was hid from "the wise and prudent"?

2. As to *the end of creation*—man, in the image of God. This image consisted in the spirituality of his constitution as rational, the glory of his position of dominion over the creatures, and the uprightness of his condition as morally pure and good. The creation is thus represented as a pyramid, rising from the foundation by gradation steps, to man throned and crowned and shining on the apex.

With this coincides the finding of science in the person of Owen, the greatest of comparative anatomists, "that the knowledge of such a being as man must have existed before men appeared; for the divine mind that planned the archetype also foreknew all its modifications." So speaks Agassiz, one of the

greatest of palæontologists, "Man is the end toward which all the animal creation has tended from the first appearance of the first palæozoic fishes."

(Cp. Prov. viii. 24-31.) It may be added that thus far Moses coincides with even Lucretius and Hæckel; excepting that the glorious fabric, which Moses ascribes to divine intelligence creative, those atheists ascribe to chance, or to undesigning force, unintelligent, blind; and that they make man to be really soulless while making the universe to be godless. Still they make man to be *the end*—the *finis operis*, though *they* cannot speak of a *finis operantis*. (The absurdity of an "end of the work" which is not "the end of a worker," is theirs.)

3. As to the creative week.

In the primitive Church, Augustine and other high authorities held that creation was *instantaneous*. Upon that view the history in Gen. i. would fall to be regarded as chronological only in form, while it is logical in fact. A case of history which, chronological in form, is logical and not chronological in fact, is to be found in one or other of the two narratives (Luke and Matthew) of the successive temptations of Christ in the wilderness. For while both narratives give the temptations in an historical order of succession, the order is not the same in both, and in one of them it must be different from the order of actual occurrence of the temptations. So conceivably in Genesis a chronological form, in the narrative of a creation which was instantaneous in fact, might have been adopted for the purpose of vivid orderly representation of what is folded in the truth, that the whole world, from summit to foundation stone, was created by God.

In more recent times there had come to be a general acceptance of the view, that creation was not instantaneous, but extended over six days; and that these were solar days of twenty-four hours each. Some (*e.g.* Thomas Burnet, *Theoria Sacra Cæli et Telluris*) hold that the creative days were periods of a thousand years each; a view which has been found in the Persian and in the Etruscan traditions of creation. Most recently the view, that the creative days must have been great periods or æons, has come to be widely accepted on account of the geologic discoveries as to the natural history of the world's origination; a history which must have extended over a series of great æons. The following reasons for suppos-

ing that the creative days were æons, not solar days, were suggested by study of the Bible, without any reference to the findings of geology.

Generally, "day" in Scripture, as in common use, is not restricted to twenty-four hours. And specially—*First*, the reason annexed to the Fourth Commandment is, that man's week should be an image of the creative week. But this it can be though the days of creation should have been æons. That would make the image to be only a miniature likeness; but a miniature may be as good a likeness as a full length. *Second*, the image is not a full length, but only a miniature in other respects: in respect of his being, man is infinitely smaller than the Creator, in whose likeness he is made; and his dominion over the creatures of earth is only a miniature likeness of the Creator's dominion over the universe. We thus know the *scale* of the likeness in those other respects, and may reasonably suppose that *the same scale* of an image indefinitely small is what exists in respect of man's distribution of his time. *Third*, in the week itself, we know what is the scale in the case of the seventh day, and it points to the conclusion that the six working days were æons. The seventh day was that of the Creator's rest. But was *His* rest a solar day of twenty-four hours? His rest from that old creation extends over the whole course of time. His rest from redemption, the new creation of grace, extends through all eternity. Here again by parity of reason, on the principle of uniformity of scale, we are led toward the conclusion that the creative days were æons.

4. As to "*reconciliation of geology with Genesis*." There is not real need of "reconciliation." It is quite fairly conceivable that with two records of so great a difference in characters, no real reconciliation should ever be effected. But, upon the view that the creative days are great periods or æons, it is found that the general course of origination described in Genesis is what really was the general course according to geology. Only, the Mosaic record must be regarded according to its nature in these two respects. (1) It gives a view of only those things which *could be seen* by a human observer placed near the surface of the earth. Thus, it says nothing about creation of angels. And it says nothing about the *creation* of

fishes, though it speaks of them in the catalogue of man's estate received from God (Gen. i. 26): the "whales" (ver. 21) are not fishes, but (*tanninim*, "long ones," the word for "dragons" of prophecy) great sea-monsters, like the *saurian* reptiles of the palæozoic. (2) Of visible things it does not give a full detail, but only a *characteristic* illustration of every stage, as if *the feature* of a "day," *the specialty* of an epoch.

With a reference to harmonising the two records, it has also been observed that the Mosaic six days fall into *two triplets*, in the one of which there is a series of *cosmical conditions*, or generals, namely, *a*, light; *b*, firmament, or, above and below; and *c*, below, the land apart from water; while in the other triplet there are, corresponding to these respectively, so many particulars or *individual bodies*, namely, *a*, the luminaries; *b*, birds and creeping things; *c*, cattle and beasts of the field. This in the second triplet would give a succession corresponding to the palæozoic, secondary, and tertiary divisions of geologic history. It will be observed that in the Mosaic history while the light appears on the first day, the luminaries, fountains of the light, do not appear until the fourth. Geologic history shows that, in fact, when the earth was enveloped in dense vapour, and yet because incandescent was self-luminous on the surface, there must have been light on the surface countless ages before the sun, moon, and stars became clearly visible from the surface of the earth. But according to the distribution into triplets there would be no need of this help from geology, since the light, as No. 1 in the first triplet, corresponds to the luminaries as No. 2 in the second.

Matters appear to be thus ripening toward a *manifested* harmony of the two records. But "he that believeth shall not make haste." Eagerness to grasp at schemes of reconciliation is not favourable to ascertainment of truth. And from the nature of the case it plainly is far from a matter of course that men shall ever be able to discover a harmony of the two records though they should both be divine. For they are widely different in character as dependent on their respective points of view. The Mosaic record is only the first word of introduction to a history of man; in the geologic record man is only the *finis* at the foot of the fly leaf (quaternary) of the last of three great volumes about nature.

5. As to *revelation* of this Mosaic beginning. The striking resemblance of some of the Gentile traditions—Etruscan,

Persian, and Chaldean—to the Mosaic account, suggests the view, that there was some primæval tradition which the Noachidæ had in common, and which was used in the Mosaic account. The use of that tradition, such as it appears in Genesis, might thus fall to be ascribed simply to a “special” providence guiding the writer of the Mosaic account to good extant means of information without any new revelation of the matter to him (though the *writing* could be “by inspiration of God”). But the question would then go back beyond the Flood to the *origin* of that primæval tradition. It could be transmitted with only one intervening link from Adam to Noah. But Adam could not have *seen* the work as Moses describes it. So that here again, in the absence of physical “science,” we are shut in to the alternatives of either *guess work* or revelation.

Some, who are sceptical about other parts of the Mosaic narrative, have held that the account of creation, so nobly simple and true, has in it an internal self-evidence of divinity. That view is consistent with the practical effectiveness of the account in creating and sustaining among mankind a real belief in creation. And the supposition of a divine revelation through Moses is favoured by a *remarkable coincidence of the geologic record with the Mosaic system of ceremonial*. The ceremonial system is characterised by a graded series of *typical* adumbrations, preparing for the advent of God in the form of man. The geologic system, on the other hand, is characterised by a graded series of *typical* adumbrations, preparing for the advent of man in the image of God. Geologic “types” and “prophecies” have thus come to be among the *voces signatæ*, the technical terminology of natural science. How was Moses led to think of a preparatory dispensation of prophetic types, like that which had been in existence countless ages before man existed? Certainly it was not through personal acquaintance with the geologic record. But it may have been through special communication from the *Author* of that record and Creator of man’s mind.

(2.) *The Fall of Man.*

There is no real hope for man unless he have a well-founded knowledge of sin; and that again cannot be apart from the historical fact of a fall into the ruinous guilt and moral impotency of sin from a first estate of uprightness and friendship with God. The traditions of the peoples have lingering broken reminiscences of a golden age of the past in which men held personal intercourse with the gods. But such traditions, without authentication, had no real hold of the heart of human life. And especially, they had no real hold of conscience toward God. For they did not with effective (*elenchos*) convincing power make the loss of that first estate to be in man's feeling connected with a "transgression" (Rom. v. 12-18) in the penal consequences of which, through guilt and corruption, all men are partakers. This is done effectually by the Mosaic account of the covenant in Eden and man's violation of it,—an account which prepares the way for the office of "the law," as that through which there is "the knowledge of sin."

The introduction at an earlier stage of "a hairy quadruped," perhaps living in trees, is not helpful in the desirable direction of moral impression. *How* a hairless biped possessing reason could originate from a "hairy quadruped" without that gift, is not a theological question, but perhaps a question for Laputan philosophers. And the gorilla descent would not account for the fact of sin. Instead of owning ancestry of that uncouth Adam in an unkempt Eden, the men of higher type have thought of themselves as the offspring of heroes who were the sons of gods. Hence *they* have been exercised about the fact of sin as something non-human, unnatural, or monstrous. But the profoundest of true philosophers have failed to account for this fact so clearly accounted for by the simple narrative of Shepherd Moses. Kant, in recognising the fact of a "radical evil," pointed in the *direction* of a fall in the first of human kind; his very expression "the *root* (*radix*) of mankind" is in the Westminster definition of Adam as covenanting with God for man. Plato's representation of a sort of ideal fall of men from uprightness in a previous state of existence, finds *reality* in the Mosaic account

of an historically previous state of existence, namely, the Edenic state. And the philosophers, while pointing in a direction in which they see that inquiry has to be made, yet really do not make a serious inquiry. An evil so very grave as to be seen by them to be a disturber of the whole moral machinery of the world's life, or poisoner of its fountain, is yet passed by them with a curious side glance. And they pass on (like the priest and the Levite) to expound the system of the world as if that dreadful thing had not existed.

One who only says a passing word about a "radical evil," without suggesting any remedy, is not in the way to give really needful guidance for man's life. The vanity of a philosophy which went on idolising a constitution that was seen to be rotten, was rebuked by that philosopher, spoken of by Augustine in his *City of God*, who cried from the heart of heathenism that there is need of some way of saving men's souls which no sect of philosophers has ever yet found out. Speculation about the *constitution* of man's nature, irrespectively of its condition, is like the futile declamation of degenerate Greek sophists about an ideally free political constitution, when they and their State were the slaves of a "barbarian"—all the more abject slaves if contented in their bondage. The sounder sense of the peoples, though making them aware of that vanity of philosophy which trusted in physiology instead of health, did, nevertheless, only waste itself in sentimental wailings over a lost golden age, or sink into despondent listlessness, or lapse into the flat desperation of commonplace worldliness. Then, at best, the wound was healed slightly by mere forms of purification and expiation, men crying, Peace! Peace! when there was no peace. There could be no key to a Paradise Regained unless men saw the true terrible cause of the Paradise Lost, so as to feel the utterness of the ruin. And this Mosaic origin of the ruin of mankind in the first Adam supplies a great want in order to a real and just view of the world, preparing men's minds for a glad reception of restoration through the last Adam, "the Desire of all nations."

That method of "instruction in righteousness," through declaration of the fact of a fall of mankind into moral impotency and hopeless guilt, has been found to be the method which is practically effective in laying (1 Cor. xv. 45-58) a strong hold on the conscience and heart of men, so as to prepare them for welcoming peace in reconciliation with

God. And the instruction is thus happily effective only when the fall is seen to be really historical, so that its consequences are felt coming home to us personally (Eph. ii. 1-3), as dread realities for us individually. The Mosaic representation of the Fall, so profoundly wholesome in instructiveness, is to all appearance quite original. The originality in this case (cp. John vii. 14-17) has no resemblance to mere originality of speculative genius. It has every appearance of consisting in sole possession of the truth. So that here, again, the question rises, How came Moses into sole possession of this truth?

(3.) *The Unity of Mankind.*

The unity of man in kin as well as kind, in origin as well as species, is illustrated in the accounts of the Flood, the Babel confusion and dispersion, and the distribution of nations over the earth. But it is most clearly exhibited in the Mosaic representation of a fall in the first man, as again it reappears in the Christian doctrine of redemption through the last Adam (Rom. v. 12-18; 1 Cor. xv. 45-48). But the doctrine of a plurality of species of men prevailed among the heathens, serving as a theoretical ground of the heathenish practice and profession of natural enmity between races. It is true that a man's being of a different species from us is no real justification for our hating him, while publicans and sinners love their own. But a very flimsy rhetoric will suffice to persuade a man that he is not bound to love his neighbour as himself. Before the American Civil War, when some men were *inclined* to believe that the Black was not their brother, the doctrine of a plurality of species flourished as in a fruitful soil. Men showed a large capacity in this direction, so that some held that the number of distinct species of men is as large as sixteen. But a Rachel-mother humanity was weeping for her children because they were not. Those who so philosophised were somehow not peaceful in believing themselves; it was felt that the world by that wisdom really knew not man.

The lowest Australian savage has a vague anticipation of a state of things in which black fellow shall be white man. The empress of a civilised world, if she hear, in the dark, one wail of an infant Hottentot, can no more persuade herself that

the suffering nature is not her own, than she can believe that an angel is a bird. Probably no man ever seriously believed in his heart that a human being is a beast. Athenians may dream about being of a different clay from "barbarians" like William Shakespeare; but when they are addressed on Mars Hill by a "barbarian," who tells them that God hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth, Damaris and Dionysius will believe in Jesus and the resurrection, and the selfish tyrant heart of man will begin to feel that this "new thing" is indeed its own forgotten dream.

The Bible teaching of the unity of mankind is *a sample of the value of supernatural revelation, even of truth that may be known by nature*. The truth may be in man, according to Plato's picture, as at the bottom of a well. In such a case as the present it may be obscured by selfish worldliness, concealed by "pollutions" or by mud-storms of impure human passion. Revelation places the truth for his rebuke and healing in the firmament like a star, beyond reach of abiding obscurations from his worldliness. Moses showed it incarnated in the history of the fall, and also applied it in the noble principle of "the adoption" (Ex. xii. 46) of born aliens into the community of the redeemed. When Paul preached at Athens it had received the supreme sanction of the sending of the gospel to all nations, in the name of Him who is the propitiation "for the sins of the whole world." A foundation thus was laid for ending selfish "man's inhumanity to man" through writing on the human heart the principle of "brotherly love" to all, and effacing thence the heathenish principle of natural enmity of races (Eph. ii. 11-22). The unity of mankind, thus inshrined in the two root Christian principles of ruin by sin and of redemption by grace, was also clearly involved in the Mosaic history of the three great catholic-human events—the Flood, the dispersion from Babel, and the distribution of mankind upon the earth.

(4.) *The Noachian Deluge.*

No event in human history is, in the substance of it, more historically certain than this. It now has been a long established fact that *the tradition of a flood is substantially as widespread as mankind is on earth*. Coincidences in the traditional details make it unmistakably clear that *the traditions all refer to one real historical catastrophe*. And the most recently dis-

covered, which, at the same time, are the most ancient, of the Gentile traditions, bear a startling close resemblance to the Mosaic account. But the Mosaic account alone is in a true catholic-human form of manifest clearness from alloy of local and national prepossessions. And the Mosaic account alone places the physical catastrophe in a true light of religious instructiveness, by showing its moral cause in the utter degeneracy of man.

Difficulties in connection with this Origin are peculiarly perplexing. In connection with them we must keep in view the moral purpose of the event as disclosed in Scripture, namely, to serve, for punishment and for warning, as a great "stroke" of that Providence which the Catechism of Westminster trenchantly defines as "most holy, wise, and *powerful*." In the light of that purpose, the difficulties, though baffling curiosity, may be seen to constitute no real stumbling-block to belief.

Thus, as to *universality*. The description "all the earth," or (an equally good rendering) "all the land," is by use and wont elastic; the precise meaning in every case being fixed by the connection in that case. Thus, in Matt. xxiv. 14, "all the world" (*οἰκουμένη*) means that to which the gospel of the kingdom is to be preached; in Luke ii. 1 (*οἰκουμένη*) it means the Roman empire; and in John xii. 19 (*ὁ κόσμος*) it means the generality of the people of Jerusalem or Palestine. In the Mosaic account of the Flood the general expression thus falls to mean all *that* world which is here *in question*—that is, the domain of *man* under discipline of the Flood. The question, therefore, whether the waters went over literally every acre of the surface of the globe, is, from the Mosaic point of view, of no importance, though, in a sceptical interest, a "philosopher" (Gibbon) may reckon it important to *invent* a day's blackness of night, enveloping a whole world which had nothing to do with the matter, instead of that shade which, not preventing a view of John and of the mother of Jesus, for an afternoon was upon the face of Palestine, when the heart of the people of that land was exercised about that which was in the awful spiritual crisis of Calvary.

As to the *number of animals* that were saved in the ark. From the same point of view it may appear that the catalogue—which is not given—does not interest us. We may suppose that it did not include whales and water-kelpies. Otherwise we have no difficulty in believing that the ark served the working purpose—to prevent man's estate in animals from being destroyed.

As to *antediluvian men*. In connection with the distribution of mankind (Gen. x. 5, 32), there are expressions which appear to imply that Noah's posterity found the earth more or less *in previous possession of men*. The supposition that antediluvians other than the Noachidæ had thus survived the Flood, would in no way go to show that the powerful stroke of Providence had missed its mark, as if those antediluvians had come alive again after being drowned. It would only show that the lesson of terror and of warning was sufficiently served by a visitation of judgment upon the central mass of mankind, through which God was dealing with man's race, in especial connection with the seed of promise, and by means of a "preaching of righteousness" (cp. Jude 14, and 2 Pet. ii. 5). *Pre-Adamites* are not now in question, except on the part of those who take an interest in the "hairy quadruped" and *his* posterity. Absolute universality relatively to mankind has a theological interest, not in connection with Noah's family, but in connection with Eve's (whose name of *Eve*, Gr. $\zeta\omega\eta$, is monumental of her being "the mother of all living").

In the Mosaic record, the story is fitted for its purpose by the catholicity of its form. It has in it nothing of a flattering unction to the Hebrew soul. The scene is not in Palestine. All mankind are in every sense in one boat. The sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour, which rises from the recovered earth, makes no distinction between Shem and his brothers; but, being a *bleeding* sacrifice (for which the appropriate word *Zebêch* here first occur in Scripture), places all alike as guilty before God (Rom. iii. 19); so that the Pharisee in the temple has no title of interest in *that* "satisfaction." And the action of Noah, as well as of Ham, shows that all alike have need of that inward spiritual purification which (1 Pet. iii. 21) is "figured" in salvation from death by means of a destroying flood. Further, the final pre-eminence is destined, not for Shem the first-born (Gen. v. 32, etc.), but for his younger brother Japheth. And the great simple history is at the same time so placed, as to bring duly into view the essential fact of the "most holy, wise, and *powerful*" providence of God ruling through the whole,—on His way, through purification of a sin-polluted world, to the salvation of the chosen seed of promise. Having thus emphatically manifested His continued retention of the real command of events in mundane history, God is represented as withdrawing from the

world's view, leaving the sacrifice as the condition of access, while the rainbow showed the way; like that householder (Matt. xxi. 33, etc.) who went into a far country, leaving servants in a testing charge of his property. We know how it went in the great historical experiment which followed. In the "times of ignorance" which God "winked at" (Acts xvii. 30), the *moral* of the Flood was forgotten by the peoples, though the fact of it might linger confusedly in their traditions; so that the Athenians might perhaps turn the story into a play, as the Londoners long after turned a more awful flood into a song of amusement, seasoned with religious sentiment (Newton's sermon, *The Oratorio*—Handel's *Messiah*); or, among populations not frivolous in worldliness, it might continue to haunt men with mere natural terrors as of a nightmare. The Mosaic Origin gives the story in its grand simplicity of native power, with its true "terrors of the Lord," persuading men to flee from a greater wrath to come. Who gave Moses this true version, and that true interpretation of a story which to mankind had become unintelligible as a half-forgotten dream?

(5.) *The Table of Nations.*

This table is owned by masterly historians like Niebuhr to be one of the most important historical documents extant, evincing its own authenticity by furnishing a clue to the real history of the great primæval movement of mankind into widespread occupation of the earth. Men of science are aware of the vast importance of such a clue as a guiding and impulsive light for ascertainment of the whole truth. It may be in effect equivalent to a flash of revelation of the whole; though, in order to that effect, the apple has to fall into a prepared soil, such as the mind of Newton. And the placing of the table of nations on this record so early, is a flash of revelation showing (Acts xvii. 26, 27) that God, though (ver. 23) He should be to mankind "unknown," yet, for a purpose of His own affecting them, kept them in view, and indeed in hand.

Looking at the matter thus, we shall not be moved, except to grateful appreciation, if we should find that such a document is at some point "brought up to date," so as to make it more distinctly intelligible to the reader of it in this

record. Upon any accepted view of the human authorship of the Pentateuch, there must have been a certain amount of "editing" of that Scripture before it finally assumed the form in which it was made public to Israel, so as to be read by Christ and His apostles. And into that editing there may have entered a completion, in the form of placing some details in a shape which would be intelligible at the time of publication. If any one see in *that* a reason for believing in a late authorship of Scripture, it is because he has brought the belief ready formed, or ready to form in his mind; and as man always finds what he brings, so everything is yellow to the jaundiced eye. For us at present the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is not essential in our inquiry. "Moses" is for us a conventional expression for this *natively* "*foundation*" *Scripture, representing the creative epoch of revelation.*

More to our purpose is the circumstance, that in this Origin the history begins to assume a distinctly *Semitic* colouring, which goes on deepening into *Abrahamism*. The Euphrates is beginning to move westward, as if destined, "against nature" (cp. 2 Kings v. 12), to be tributary to the Jordan,—it may be (Gen. xlix. 10) at some very distant date, which dying eyes can see in the deep counsel of God. For always the grand fact in the history is Providence; so that the stream is in reality a sovereign purpose of God, "doing according to His will," as Nebuchadnezzar shall be made to see; and Belshazzar, too; though "jesting Pilate" may imagine vainly that *his* is that hand which "has written" the superscription on the cross, in the languages of mankind, and "in the fulness of the times," at the *umbilicus terrarum* and confluence of æons. And now, in order to see the beginning of that essential *trend* in the history, we must look at the next subject.

(6.) *The Babel Confusion of Tongues and Dispersion.*

The central matter here is the confusion of tongues, which the Scripture characteristically places in connection with a spiritual cause, viz., that ambition, by flattering which, in the promise, "Ye shall be as God," Satan persuaded Adam to become subject to *him* as prince of this world. The question, how far, if at all, the narrative is intended to represent the agency or providence in this case as "extraordinary" or miraculous, need not exercise us here and now. As in the

case of the Flood, the point of the narrative plainly is the *fact* of providence, as visiting mankind in judgment on account of sin, while even the judgment carries onward a wider purpose of mercy. Apart from that distribution of mankind which is represented by the table of nations, the dispersion is seen in its proximate cause, the confusion of tongues, which itself appears as the immediate effect of the divine judgment on account of the sin. Such a history may not be found to be so distinctly traceable in after times as might be imagined from the aspect which the matter assumes when placed in bold relief and clear distinctness of outline on the record. But there are historical side-lights on the matter, in which it may be profitable as well as interesting to linger for some little time. Here at the outset we must once more note the commanding prominence of morality, *moral* government of God, in the history. The great history of redemption, to which these beginnings are an introduction, has, in its plagues of Egypt, a whole *Iliad* of moral instructions through physical wonder and terror. Those supernatural works are in large measure *on the line* of nature—prolonged or deepened, so as to show that God is really the Lord of nature in its ordinary course. But *the essential interest*, there as here, to which Gentile traditions will contribute little or nothing of real illumination, *is in the central fact, that mankind have brought this upon themselves by their crime, in apostatising from the living God.* The form which their criminal ambition assumed may, to those who have looked with their mind's eye upon a picture of *Birs Nimroud*, appear as ludicrously disproportioned to the grandeur of the idea of towering up to heaven, for the purpose of dethroning heaven's king. But a study of the *Newgate Calendar* may show that "the romance of crime" is but imaginary, and its reality is a meanly stupid thing. It is not a purpose of Moses to make ungodliness look noble or wise, or grand as in *Prometheus Vincit*. And the towering ambition may be seen in its true nature nearer home than ancient Mesopotamia: when a strong man gives his life to making "a heap of money," which will be to him as a molehill is to a mole, monumental of successful burrowing; or, to shining as a politician; or, to making a sensation as an infidel; or, eke, to domineering as a parish pope.

The comparative insignificance of the material form need not disconcert us. Within the last two or three years, antiquarians in the Euphrates valley have been among the kindred of Abraham, and have been tracing his ancestry up for two centuries before his time. It appears that that site of future great empires was then in its day of small things; so that his

migration westward must for that locality have been a really considerable event. And when we reflect upon the matter, we perceive that the Bible had not led us to look for anything different. It represents him as having, in a great and memorable battle or campaign of nine kings, exercised a commanding influence, like that of Wellington in the last campaign of Napoleon I., with a force (Gen. xiv. 14) that now would not venture on invasion of an English parish. Evidently the state of things was simple and elementary. But great things are not necessarily bulky; witness the Thermopylæ 300, and the "pearl of great price," for the purchase of a world, in the manger at Bethlehem.

The prominence given to the *tongues* is suggestive of civilisation ("articulate speaking" is Homeric epithet for *man*). But real civilisation has little to do with what are called *the arts of life*. The arts of life on Homer's shield of Achilles might well enough serve as the requisite arts of life in the most advanced civilisation of our day. The mode of travelling in England at the beginning of this century was not nearly so like the manner of to-day as it was to the manner of three thousand years ago, when Telemachus went wandering in search of the long absent Odysseus: probably to an Englishman of A.D. 1801 the transfigurations of Mentor would be not more^a astonishing than the steam-engine and electric telegraph. We must wholly clear our minds of the shopkeeping fancy that the prince of Ithaca was not a gentleman because he did not wear Parisian boots, or that there may not have been the highest of true civilisation where "Adam delved and Eve span" (as well as where the English Pericles is felling oaks).

We thus may come to see and feel that on that very great occasion men were few and life was simple, while the transaction was a central business for the mankind of all nations and all ages. We again observe that the expressions in Gen. x. 5, 32 suggest the view that there may have been a *diaspora* even of antediluvians—Cainites or such like—who took no direct part in the real central business of the world, but may relatively have been outsiders, obscurely existing in the background out of sight and mind of real world history; as some very considerable populations of mankind are to-day discounted, when effectively or potentially the real world is

Christendom—the visible domain of Christ. Consistently with the purpose of this history we may picture to ourselves the muster at Babel as having included only, even of the Noachidæ, that central mass which had held together and which contained within it the promised seed; as Odysseus, hidden in the leaves, was like a covered fire-spark of future kindling in the ashes. We may look upon them as effectively *the mankind* with whom God was dealing—among other purposes—“for our learning.” “The rest of mankind” will perhaps in due time follow in their train.

When we consider the locality, we begin to feel ourselves on historic ground. Abraham is for us a fully historical person through the exodus, which would be meaningless without the covenant revealed to him when he first entered Canaan; so that the very name of “the Hebrews” (“Crossers”) which the Egyptians gave to his posterity, had in it a distinct allusion to his having “crossed” the Jordan (if not also the Euphrates) on his faithful journeying from the plain between the rivers. And outside of Scripture there are various indications combining in the conclusion that there must have been some historical dispersion of mankind radiating in various directions from a central region, somewhere in the neighbourhood of the mountain system of Armenia, where still there is a kingly “Ararat,” with diadem of perpetual ice and snow, which may very well have been that great pasture land “between the rivers,” which rise in those mountains as if from one cradle, to meet again on “the plain,” and go down to sea together like twins long parted but now united until they die.

One of these indications is our own Japhetic or Aryan grandmother tongue, supposed to be now most nearly represented by the Sanskrit of India, and which has numerous daughters in the sister Aryan tongues that have been heard more or less purely, as Persian, Greek, Latin, Slavonic, Teutonic, and Celtic. How numerous the progeny of grandchildren, etc., may be, how extensive the cousinhood of that one family of tongues, may appear from the fact that English and Scotch are only two of perhaps a dozen of living Teutonic tongues; while of Celtic tongues spoken in Galatia centuries before and after Paul preached there, four are living and eloquent in the British Isles to-day. Through such indications learned men are able approximately to localise the

centre of that ever-memorable migration. Thus Hæckel, who derives man's origin from the beast, traces mankind to somewhere in North-Western Asia, where he loses them.

Another of the indications is furnished by the *traditional tales* that still are found living on those tongues of the peoples. Some of us may in early life have listened to these (*Sgeulachdan*), if not narrated them, in winter evenings at the rustic fireside, without thinking that we were keeping up a memorial "cairn" of the dispersion from Babel; the late John F. Campbell, Esq. ("of Islay"), collected several volumes of these traditional tales from the lips of Gaelic-speaking Highlanders and Islanders of Scotland; some of them near lone and wild St. Kilda, outermost of Outer Hebrides, probably the farthest west to which any Japhetic tongue had found its way from Central Asia before the new migrations across the oceans. There is a cycle of the tales in substance the same in every district. *And the same cycle of tales* is found, more or less completely, all over the world, among the Aryan or Japhetic peoples of the dispersion. They have been found by the brothers Grimm (*Märchen*) in Central Germany; by others among the Fins of Lapland; and yet by others, as a broken *débris*, like the populations there, on the West Coast of Africa. In the Middle Ages they went the round of a "thousand and one nights"—doubtless a Persian element in the tales of the times of the good Caliph Haroun Alraschid. Long before that they had been told to Alcinoös at the fire-side drinking wine "like a god," while his queen was spinning in the Island of the Phæacians, by the shipwrecked lord of rugged Ithaca. Of course they have been told at all times in India the immemorial. The tales vary their costume according to place and time; so that in the Gaelic tradition the "king" is a well-conditioned farmer, and the "princess" is Shiela Mackenzie. But even in the drapery there may be seen curious tokens of remote origination. Thus, a tremendous animal,—of the Scottish Gaelic tales "the swankie one,"—a sort of supernatural greyhound-lion, is found in Bernera, Sound of Harris, where no such creature can have ever been, nor would remain half an hour without leaping "overboard" into the sea. He must have travelled from America, over lands and seas, and through generations of many centuries,

on the passing breath of men who spoke that Aryan tongue which now alone is heard in little Bernera amid the never-silent waves. In substance the stories are the same everywhere and at all times. And they must have been learned by heart, near its cradle, by the still united family of the Aryans before they parted wandering deviously from that original centre.

Those who once grieved under the tedium of these tales, so often told, may now find consolation in feeling themselves coming into a cogent *proof of the unity of mankind*, so that the word shall here come true—*forsan et hæc olim meminisse juvabit*. For now, still harping on the subject of the tongues, we shall look at the *writing* of them. Sir Matthew Hales observed that the useful *arts of life* are all recent—of yesterday. That may be so, but the yesterday is perhaps four thousand years ago or more. The art of delving, for instance! The fact is, that the main substantive “arts of life” are literally *arts of life* in this sense, that men could not keep alive on earth without them. There must have existed somehow a fair elementary acquaintance with the substantive arts of life. And as for the art of writing, it happens, as we noted in passing, that their present descendants have, in that very muster-place of the Euphrates valley, been of late years laboriously studying writings which must have been executed on that spot at a time before that of Abraham, and comparatively close to that of the supposed dispersion. Then, as to another family of tongues, the Semitic, in whose sisterhood or cousinhood are the Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic. Ewald has concluded for us, from their common use of the same words for *writing*, *pen*, and *ink*, that the art of writing with pen in ink must have been in use among the Shemites before their primæval mother-tongue gave place to those daughters—that is, we now say, before the Babel dispersion. But we soon perceive in the following fact a curiously interesting connection *between the two families* of the Shemitic and the Japhetic tongues; as if to show that, after all, “blood is thicker than water.” Japhet, the younger brother, *learned his letters* from Shem—*borrowed the letters*, not the tongue. As often as we utter the word *alphabet*, or (rightly) name the letters *a, b, c*, we unconsciously prove—as a man

spoke prose without knowing it—that we have received the *writing* of the Shemites without their tongue. And of this a striking illustration came to light some years ago in the discovery of the *Moabite Stone*. Though the Greeks looked down upon Orientals as “barbarians,” yet Herodotus in his history honourably records the tradition that they had received their alphabet from the Phœnicians (“Cadmus” is *kedhm*=the East). Now the letters on the *Moabite Stone* inscription of King Mesha are in the Phœnician form of the (Semitic) letters commonly known to us as Hebrew. And that is very nearly the identical form of the letters on the oldest known inscriptions in Greek (this one can see in a *fuesimile* of the *Moabite Stone* and Greek inscriptions). So that there we see Hellas, brightest of the daughters of Japhet, in her childhood, being schooled into her *a b c* by dusky Phœnicia, the daughter of Shem.

These—the Semitic and the Aryan or Japhetic—are the two *civilised* families of tongues. They may be so described, because, through an excellence of their organisation, combining delicate flexibility with strength, they are found susceptible of refined culture, progress, improvement, correspondingly to the advancement in the mind of the peoples they are spoken by. There is a third family of tongues which have been spoken of as “barbarous”—perhaps by men “speaking evil of things which they know not.” These languages are said to be comparatively amorphous or formless, shapelessly uncouth. They may be numbered by hundreds—*e.g.* in China, where one of them may be spoken by many millions; and America and the South Sea Islands, where one of them may be spoken by only a few persons, and may die out any day—as the last native Tasmanian died a few years ago.

We now come to what, for us in our inquiry, is the grand point as to this matter:—*It now can be spoken of as an ascertained fact of science, the science of comparative philology, that mankind originally spoke only one tongue.*

The “barbarous” tongues, though comparatively featureless, so as to have little of distinct resemblance to one another, or to anything, yet *are* human tongues, expressive of rational thought and feeling, so as to be different from all the voices of creatures

that are not rational. They have so much in common as to admit of being grouped together into a family, though it should be a cousinhood forty times removed. And this whole family has so much in common with the two civilised families, as to show that all alike are descended from one (Eve) original mother-tongue. This is not a guess of enthusiasts in language. It is a solid ascertainment of the science of philology, as the law of gravitation is a solid ascertainment of astronomical science. Many of the languages of mankind are not known to philologists, as many of the stars were not known to Sir Isaac Newton. And philologists may be perplexed by some of the things they know, as Newton was by some of the things he knew. But universal gravitation was an established fact of science for mankind. And now—it is affirmed—it is an established fact of science, to dispute which would be to betray a discreditable ignorant presumption, that, within the period of human history, “the whole earth (Gen. xi. 1) was of one language and of one speech.”

That is a strong proof of the unity of mankind. We will not say that it is of itself conclusive. That would be dogmatising; and it is not called for on our part, since there are various other strong proofs,—such as the universality of sin,—and strongest of all, the *convergence* of various lines of independent evidence, and the *intuition* of “one touch of nature making the whole world kin.” But at the present point we are entitled to say that in our judgment unity of language is a strong proof of unity in species and in origin.

If there had originally been many families of mankind, every one of them with a language of its own, would they ever have come to speak one tongue, from which the existing tongues are derived as from a common parent? Then the amalgam would require to be so perfect that all trace of the origin of distinctness should be lost in it. And that, to scholars familiar with the etymology of mixed languages—the disappearance of all traces of distinctness—is itself a sheer impossibility. In the English language, for instance, perhaps there is not so much as one word that cannot be confidently assigned to that one of the distinct tongues to which it originally belonged. And the suggestion that *all* the words of a tongue which is an amalgam should have lost every trace of original distinctness of origin, cannot for a moment be entertained by any scholar, or any man who now intelligently reflects upon the matter.

Historically, the tendency of languages is to multiply into greater and greater numbers of distinct tongues. The varied peoples of an empire may come to speak one tongue, as English now is spoken over the British empire. But Scotch continues to be spoken there, and four Celtic tongues, in addition to various other tongues, both civilised and "barbarous." So it was under the ancient world empires. And if the Latin be no longer spoken as by the Romans, it is multiplied into so many distinct tongues of the Italians, Spaniards, Portuguese, and (with an element of Celtic) French. Now the multiplication, which thus may have place even with amalgamation of peoples, cannot but much more have place with dispersion of them. The simple separation of the peoples causes a growing distinctness even of the originally one tongue; such that a Lowland Scotchman cannot converse with a Hollander, nor a Highland Scotchman with a Welshman, and Argyleshire finds it "heavy" to converse with Donegal.

This is especially noticeable in the case of the Turanian ("barbarous") tongues, where natural shapelessness easily passes into unintelligible strangeness. If the tongue is in writing, and the organisation of society be stable, the language may remain in a fixity as of stiff clay. But among fluctuating communities, the languages are rather as a liquid or viscous mud. When a community separates into sections, perhaps near to one another, but without intercourse, in sullen isolation or in hostility, a very short time suffices to make the sections unintelligible to one another. This is one of the sorest trials to our missionaries in such localities, illustrating the value of a miraculous gift of *known* tongues. After a missionary has painfully mastered a language whose remotest cousins were not known to him, and perhaps has written a grammar of it and translated the Gospels into it, on his going into a neighbouring district he may have the same ungenial task-work to begin again, while in the meantime the language he has mastered may, through decay of those from whom he learned it, be ceasing to be known among mankind. That man makes a very great and painful sacrifice for God and his neighbour, though perhaps he is not heard of among the "heroes of science." However, in time, life is only beginning.

We thus can see how the *moral cause* of the dispersion may have operated; it may be, with an intensity accelerated by direct supernatural agency of God in judgment. On the one hand, selfish ambition, in possession of a community, tends to collision, alienation, separation, out of which arises confusion of tongues, one faction becoming more and more unintelligible to another. On the other hand, that mutual unintelligibility, making intercourse painfully difficult, and giving occasion for jealousy ("ye are spies") among those who know themselves to be hostile, if not treacherous ("ill-doers are ill-dreaders"), tends to aggravate and stereotype the condition of separation. To this there may have been added the religious horror of a simple people detected and confounded in the great crime of rebellion (*Nimrod* means "rebel") against God. The dispersion may thus have had in it, perhaps lasting through generations, something of the feeling of a gang of criminals, who, detected and exposed in some frightful complicity of evil action, flee from that centre, *and from one another*, in the repulsion of evil-doers towards one another when they have reached the maturity of terror-stricken remorse. But the representation in the history, though it have in it some aspect of this dramatic vividness, may owe that aspect to the circumstance that the history has to be, through brevity, highly elliptical, bringing the salient points together at once into view. If on this account, beyond the natural influence of ungodly selfishness in man, proximity occasioning friction, collision, and explosion, we see, further, a direct supernatural action of God, Moses has no interest in forbidding us to see that. His *essential* point is, under the providence of God, the crime of man's ambition in apostasy from the Most High, punished by dissolution of the solidarity of that apostate mankind.

And so, even in the dissolution of mankind into a wide dispersion, we see it carrying with it, as if a Cain's brand on every face, the dismal proof of its unity in the universality of sin. Even the Pharisee knows that all men are sinners but himself, and in his case there are other witnesses than his self-righteousness, such as the law in which he trusts. Take the law as expounded by any reasonable being that ever lived (Rom. i., ii., iii.), whether the law of nature or the law supernaturally revealed

on Sinai, and the whole race of mankind, Jew and Gentile alike, are by it found transgressors, guilty and unclean. There has been since the first Adam only one man who could say without manifest indecency, Which of you convinceeth me of sin? And He was not one of the Adamites now in question. Now, sin is *unnatural*; for the Creator of nature is holy. To speak of a sinfulness which, in the sense now in question, is natural, would be to speak nonsense. It is unnatural, as disease is unnatural. Disease is not the less unnatural though men should be born with it; though all men should be born with it, in all ages and all nations. *A universal congenital disease* would only show *inheritance* of this foul unnatural thing from a common stock of parentage in one man. And *that inheritance* cannot be from "a hairy quadruped," perhaps living in trees. We do not need to go to Westminster or Lambeth or the Vatican; we need only go to the Mosaic *Origines* in order to see that "all mankind, descended from Adam by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression."

Pre-Adamites are excluded by that argument. Sir William Dawson, an expert scientific archaeologist of highest rank, has recently (*Transactions* of the Victoria Institute, A.D. 1887) published an estimate of the amount of time during which it is naturally possible that mankind should have been resident upon the earth. His estimate is that it cannot have been more than some eight thousand years. There thus was very little time for pre-Adamites—sinless, like the "blameless Ethiopians" of mythical imagination—to replenish the earth, *and completely vanish away from it*. But though they were here to-day in myriads, they are outside of this history. They have not the inheritance of sin, and they cannot have the hope of redemption; and Christ came to call, not the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

(7.) *Egypt and Sinai.*

These are a background of the great history of Israel's redemption, respectively, in its two parts, of deliverance and of consecration. They now are better known to Bible students than they ever were before. Since the discovery of the key to the meaning of Egyptian writing, the study of the antiquities of Egypt has resulted in placing within reach of us a knowledge of the ancient land, such as it must have been at the time of the

exodus, in some respects more comprehensive than was attainable to the Israelites themselves. And in our time the Sinaitic peninsula has been so explored, with aids of improved methods of research, that we can obtain from books a really more exact acquaintance with it than could be formed by forty years of shepherding there in the days of Moses. (The late Professor Palmer spent two or three years in the "great and terrible wilderness," probably the first thoroughly qualified student of the human life *in situ*. His brother, Captain Palmer, had charge of the *survey* of the Sinaitic mountain group by Royal Engineers.)

This gives the advantage of our feeling ourselves upon historic ground, as when the student of a campaign travels over the ground personally, with plans of the battles and sieges, and a map of the theatre of war. We thus are delivered from the vague impression, which is often strongly influential though unperceived, that *everything* about that ancient history of redemption is a sort of day-dream, of romancing religious imagination of the Hebrews. And for apologetics we obtain the further gain of an important evidence of the authenticity of the history. For *on comparing that view of ancient Egypt and Sinai which is on the background of the history with what we now know to have been the condition and aspect of them both at the time of the exodus*, we perceive that *the history must have come to us from a mind to which that condition and aspect were familiar*. And from what is known of the following times, it is demonstrable that *such familiarity with that Egypt and Sinai cannot have been in the mind of any Israelitish writer of a later date than the age of the exodus itself*. It is conceivable that the writer of the history should, like Luke (i. 1-4), have collected his materials from those "who from the beginning were eye-witnesses." The presumption of really historical criticism is that the writer must have been Moses himself, who was mighty "in word" as well as "deed," and had the profoundest interest in the perpetuation of a knowledge of the great things of the redemption, and had forty years of life, in the full possession of his faculties, after the emancipated people had settled into sojourn in that wilderness. But for our purpose it suffices to know that the history is authentic in the ordinary sense of the expression—that is, that the informant here had good means of making sure of the accuracy of the information which he gives. And *the internal evidence of that geographical familiarity with Egypt and Sinai which appears on the background of the history assures us that the materials of the history, in the substance of it as affecting our inquiry, are, directly or indirectly, derived from personal knowledge of the things recorded*.

The distinct authenticity of the Egypt and Sinai of Exodus is impressively significant. It is as if a strange face, which no man has seen upon the earth for three generations, and which all that time is known to have been buried from the view of mankind, while there never has been anything like it in the world, were now to be shown to us in a photograph by a child. The photograph is known to have been in existence, in possession of a child, two generations ago. And now, when the long-buried face is discovered in its mummy coffin, just such as it must have been when in life, the likeness is seen to have been exact. The picture of that Egypt and Sinai, which cannot have been familiar to any Israelitish writer after the period of the events, is unmistakably exact from the original. And yet this writer manifestly had no more thought of drawing that picture which we see on the background of his narrative than a photographic plate has thought of taking into itself a likeness of a face. The informant's mind was wholly occupied with the matters of the redemption, and the geography of Egypt and Sinai placed itself in his mind without his thinking of it; as, when we are observing the services of an open-air communion, a picture of the landscape is, without our knowing it, formed on the *retina* of our eye, which is nature's photographic plate.

1. As to *Egypt*. The monumental history of Egypt has really no chronology; those archæologists who endeavour to place the events in an order of time are found differing from one another by thousands of years—which is very conclusive. But *the monuments, along with the existing face of Egypt, enable the Egyptologist to see clearly what must have been the state and aspect of things in Egypt at the period of the exodus. And it is found that it must have been exactly the state and aspect of things Egyptian which appears on the background of the Mosaic history.* An expert Egyptologist of the first class (Mr. Stuart Poole in "Egypt" articles in the *Contemporary Review*) has stated that the "Egyptian" section of the Pentateuch (Gen. xxxix.—Ex. xv.) is, in respect of exactness of representation of things as they were in Egypt, regarded by archæologists as an authentic monument of the same trustworthiness as those monuments now being disinterred which were executed by the Egyptians themselves at the time they represent. But *the Israelites after the exodus time had no connection with Egypt until the peaceful reign of Solomon, when the Egypt of the exodus time was buried in a distant past.* In the intervening period, they were isolated from both Egypt and Sinai by a flame girdle of hostile heathenism to the south and east of Palestine, intercepting communication with those lands beyond; while in the heart of Palestine itself they were engaged in fierce wars

with powerful enemies, like the hero who did battle with three "lion-like men" in a pit. It is not this Israel that photographed Egypt in Gen. xxxix.—Ex. xv.

2. As to *Sinai*. *There is no trace of any familiarity with the peninsula, any real acquaintance with it, as entering into the life of Israel after the forty years of sojourning there.* Between five and six centuries after (1 Kings xix. 8), Elijah, in a terrible crisis of Israel's history, made a mysterious journey to "Horeb, the mount of God." But that appears in the history, not as an ordinary pilgrimage on a wonted route, but rather as a strange thing, in keeping with the awfulness of the crisis (like his final disappearance from the world), in order that he might for a time be in *complete seclusion* from Israel, as Moses had been before he first was called of God upon that mount. It is supposed that (Gal. i. 17, where "Arabia" may include the peninsula), a millennium after Elijah's visit, the region may have been visited, in a like time of great momentous crisis for the kingdom of God, by yet another hero of the faith, worthy to be of "the first three" along with Moses and Elijah. But this again (Gal. i. 16) was for a like purpose of *complete seclusion*. The great arterial route of commerce, between Euphrates and the Nile, which lay across the peninsula, may, under the Greek and Roman empires, have been frequented by enterprising Jews of the dispersion on business thoughts intent. And the valley of the Akaba, on the east side of "the great and terrible wilderness," must, from the time of Solomon, have been traversed by such Israelites as went to voyaging upon the Red Sea from Ezion-geber. But in those days men were not descriptive tourists, leisurely wandering out of the beaten tracks "in search of the picturesque." And even in our day a commercial traveller by rail from New York to San Francisco will not linger in a region of the Rocky Mountains, known to be frequented by roving, thievish, murderous redskins, remote from the security of the guarded public way. The Scripture photograph of Sinai was not received into the eye of chance commercial travellers of those later ages ("with beard on shoulder," Spanish proverb) in side-glances from the hurried march of armed caravans.

Upon the present point, of the presumable authenticity of the "Sinaitic" part of the history, an interesting and not unimportant side-light comes in from the *living traditions of Moses* in the peninsula. Geographical names like *Ayin Mousa*—"Moses' Well"—and *Jebel Mousa*—"Mount Moses"—are of some importance for authentication, though they must have been given at a later time; and thus are less convincing than Egyptian words and other archaisms in the record, where the

“speech bewrayeth” contemporaneousness. The living tradition has in it a distinct evidence, founded upon the presumption that this is a “survival” of impression that was made by the presence of Moses and his Israel upon the heart of the native population of that wild region at the time. That population has changed, with the lapse of time, in language, in religion, and to some considerable extent in race. But, from the nature of the geographical and political conditions, the characteristic customs of the populations have probably more than in any other region of the earth remained to this day substantially as they must have been three thousand years ago. Among other things, there has survived a great copiousness of oral tradition, such as lives where mind is active, and speech is free, and leisure is frequent, and books are not in use, and newspapers are unknown. The tradition has a palæozoic division, referring to the heathenism of the times before the exodus; and a Kainozoic, or tertiary and quaternary division, referring to the recent periods of Christian and Mahommedan occupation of Sinai. But, in clearly recognisable distinctness from both, between the two, as a geological division lies distinct from those above it and those beneath it, there is a Mosaic tradition. And in that tradition it appears that Mosaism still holds a certain place of suzerainty in the wilderness imagination—say like “Solomon” in Eastern traditions of wisdom (or wizardism). Robert Bruce, when he was a solitary wandering fugitive, was spoken of as the “monarch of the mountain;” he no doubt really *was* the true king of his mountain land. So the spirit of the Hebrew deliverer and legislator appears to live in traditional monarchy of the mountain in that region which he has for ever made his own. This is very remarkable in such a case. A poet, though he should have been personally unknown, may continue to live among his own people, in

Those strains, which many an answering heart
Will kindling seize, and glad prolong,
Through his own dear-loved land of song.

So it may be said of him—

A nation's heart shall be thy grave :
Thy nameless spell is o'er us cast,
Thy work remains, thy toil is past.

Thus Euripides, in his Epigram upon the great historian of Greece, said that all Greece, “the whole Hellenic world,” was *μνᾶμα Θουκυδίδου*,—“monumental of Thucydides.” But Moses was a stranger to the forefathers of these rovers. He and his Israel have never been in relation of kindred or affinity to this

land. They and their belongings have ever been *Gershom*—"stranger"—there for a short time, as if a flock of birds of passage had lighted there. Yet in tradition of those wild rovers he lives and reigns. His image is in the memory of their hearts, mysterious, majestic, commanding, as he was to the dazzled eyes of Israel on that day

When down the mount he trode,
All glowing from the presence of his God.

SEC. 4. "*Elias*:" wonder of wisdom; prediction of the
inecalculable.

In the system of Old Testament Scripture the Pentateuch is to the other books as the Gospels are to the other books of the New Testament, the foundation on which they are built, the fountain from which they flow, the sun of which they are the planetary stars. Its history shows a creation, from which proceeds a providence appearing in the other books. Moses occupies a like relation to those who so often are grouped along with him as "the prophets." He not only was a prophet, like them; but, unlike them, was (Gal. iii. 19) a "mediator," thus typical of Him that should come (Heb. viii. 6, ix. 15, xii. 24; cp. Deut. xviii. 15). As mediator he was under God the author of a new creation,—of the theocracy,—bringing God's people into manifested being in the world through distinct nationality of condition (Ex. xix. 6). And he remained (Heb. iii. 6) at the head of this constitution as an honoured faithful servant, until the Son came to assume the headship of the house. One department of the constitution, the ceremonial system (with connected civil institutions), was a teaching, or silent prophecy, which practically was to Israel the open Bible, in which the people saw, as in a picture gospel, the way of a sinner's life in God. That was so distinctively Mosaic, that (2 Cor. iii. 14-18) the gospel now is Moses unveiled.

Moses thus, even as a prophet, is alone in his glory (Deut. xxxiv. 10); among men the only one "like unto" him is Christ. Not only there is in his utterances an important element of miraculous prediction, especially regarding Israel's future in connection with their tenure of Canaan under covenant of Jehovah. In the grand sense of prophecy, authoritative

intimation of the mind and will of God, he is the greatest of all prophets excepting (John i. 18) that only-begotten Son who hath declared the Father, being in His bosom. In a real sense the later prophets derived their light from Moses, as the planetary stars and their satellites all receive of the fulness of the sun. As the apostles, while inspired of God, yet were ministers of Christ; so the later prophets, speaking the word of Jehovah, yet administered the revelation originally given through Moses. Their activity largely consisted in application of the Mosaic principles and laws. Israel's life thus flowed from the rock that had been smitten in the wilderness. Not only the new predictions and the teachings, but the historical action and the sacred song, and the moralising and the philosophical reflection,—all the manifold activity of theocratic national life was an evolution out of that original creation through "Moses, the man of God." He alone is thus another name for the Old Testament.

It therefore is desirable for us that we now should have use of another name than his, when we are to have under consideration what is less than the Old Testament. We now are to restrict our attention to prophecy, apart from legislation. And prophecy is to be considered by us only in its aspect of evidencing revelation, through miraculous prediction of the incalculable, or more widely, wonder of wisdom. We therefore desire to have, in place of the name of Moses, a name of some other prophet. And that other name behoves to be *Elias*.

Elias is that prophet who appeared in glory (Luke ix. 31) along with Moses on the mount of the glorious transfiguration of Jesus. He is the one whom God's people were expecting (John i. 21), according to promise (Mal. iv. 5), to come as the forerunner of Messiah; as in fact he did come (Matt. xvii. 12, cp. Luke i. 17), though they did not know it. And in the actual history of his career in his own time, there were various circumstances which mark him out as occupying, in the long line between Moses and Christ, a position somewhat resembling, in solitary grandeur, that of the great original prophet of Israel, and to be thus fitted to serve to us as a landmark in the retrospect.

Samuel, in whom began the series of "the prophets" after Moses, and who was, in a sense, a second founder of the commonwealth of Israel, placing it on the normal footing of theocracy under a king, was in his activity at least as much

political and priestly as prophetic. He judged Israel until he had ordained Saul to the kingdom, and anointed David for the succession; so that in his career the prophetic activity does not appear in full undivided distinctiveness. But Elias was nothing but a prophet, proverbial for "spirit and power" in his office. Prophecy appears in him with a certain un-earthly transcendentalism, in some respects more vividly impressive in aspect than prophecy was in even Moses himself; so that his giant figure is in some respects the most remarkable in all that ancient history of greatness resulting from possession by the word of the Lord.

In his person we see a definitive separation of prophecy from civil government, and from the ordinary ministry of religion. In relation to both, the prophet assumes an independent footing of censorial vigilance. Israel's covenanted relationship to Jehovah, which Moses had watched over in its cradle, is watched over by Elias when it is declining toward the grave. His action is in a period of fatefully great crisis for Israel's true life, throughout which he resembles Moses, both in the passion of his intercession for the covenant people, and in the faithfulness of his dealing with them on behalf of their offended God. He was like Moses, too, and like that Greater One with whom they two conversed on the holy mount, in respect of a period of seclusion—in all three cases marked by the number 40—as if for consecration for an arduous conflict that was impending for them in the warfare of heaven against hell. We remember that Elijah (1 Kings xix. 8), for his forty days, went to "Horeb, the mount of God," where Moses had spent his seclusion of forty years. Finally, the two were alike in a certain mystery of their departure from the earth, as well as in the wonder of their appearance long after "in glory" here below, the only two men who have literally had a "day of heaven on earth." And as Moses inaugurated the distinctive career of Israel under "the law," so it is in Elijah's prophetic activity that there began to appear, in connection with Israel's widening relations to the great powers of the world, that comprehensive outlook of prophecy, toward the fortunes of the world and its kingdoms, in which there came into commanding prominence miraculous prediction, with reference to the world in general, to the Church in especial, and above all, to the coming Messiah. But from this point onward the grand form of Elias will be to us only a landmark with a name, to mark the distinction between "prophecy" simply and "Moses in the law."

(1.) *The question of Apologetics here.*

In connection with Christ's own prediction of His resurrection, we saw, as to the logic of the argument from prophecy, that it hinges upon the *miraculousness* of the utterance, *wonder* of wisdom, *manifested supernaturalism* of knowledge. Miracle may appear in utterance, irrespectively of prediction,—for instance, in giving correct information regarding a *past* which is beyond the reach of the man's knowledge by nature; or, in giving a *real view* of the world, such as the man could not have attained to without supernatural revelation. But in relation to evidence of prophecy on behalf of the Bible religion, the central and typical case of miraculous utterance is that of *prediction of the incalculable*,—of foretelling a future which it is naturally impossible for man to know at the time of the utterance; or, which cannot have come naturally to the knowledge of this prophet who is speaking. The miracle does not appear until the prediction is fulfilled by the event; and therefore unfulfilled prophecy does not at present lie directly in our way; since (cp. Deut. xviii. 21, 22) it cannot be alleged with any show of reason worth considering, that prophecies of Scripture have been *falsified* by the event.

We ought, however, before passing from this point, to make a note of the circumstance, that in fact *there have not been ostensible falsifications of Scripture prophecy by the event*. In connection with the Mosaic beginnings, we observed as remarkable the circumstance, that a Hebrew writer, speaking of so many things in *the past* about which the rest of mankind were demonstrably mistaken, has apparently not made any mistake. And we now observe as remarkable the companion circumstance, that in so large a number of predictions, regarding a *future* which it was impossible for man to know by nature, there has not, in three thousand years, been discovered any mistake. Moses (Deut. xviii. 21, 22), after speaking of the greater prophet that was to be raised up, expressly prescribed this as a negative test of the reality of divine revelation in prophecy, so that the prophet was to be regarded as false if the event should not occur according to his prediction. And it is a very remarkable fact that in all

the history of those confused millenniums, there has not occurred one even respectably alleged case of such falsification on the part of Bible prophets. This fact is well fitted to occasion grave thoughts in minds that are capable of seriously thinking about such matters in accordance with sound reason.

But now the question is, positively, as to fulfilment; occurrence of the event correspondingly to the prediction, so as to show that the event was foreknown. The allegation is, that there have been such fulfilments; such that the prophecy is a miracle, evidencing the truth and divinity of the religion. It is manifest that this allegation is of the profoundest and most vital importance. There may be other important matters in connection with prophecy. But for us inquiring as to the truth of the religion it is impossible that there should be any other thing of nearly equal importance. Or, at least, it *is* for us a very important question. *Is it true*, can it be, that, in connection with this religion there has been fulfilment of prophecy, constituting wonder of wisdom, miraculous attestation of the religion as from God?

We desire to dwell upon that point here and now, with a view to realisation of the significant importance of it, as well as to clear and full appreciation of the distinctive nature of the case. We shall therefore make some preliminary observation upon two ways in which the matter is in some danger of being misapprehended or obscured,—namely, (1) through a certain view of the meaning of the study of prophecy; and (2) through certain theories of the authorship of particular prophetic books.

1. *As to the meaning of the study of prophecy.* There goes under this name an exercise consisting in our endeavour to make out what was *the process in the mind of man* through which prophecy came to be spoken and written. That is an interesting question. And, if we were able to ascertain the truth about it, the ascertainment might make some addition to our knowledge of *the mind of man*, or, contribute some new illustration of what we may have previously known of that mind. In a campaign, a military surgeon may make new ascertainments, or find fresh illustrations for anatomy, as to the body of man; and a military engineer may in like manner add to previous ascertainments in topography, and

dynamics or gunnery. Further, if a man have a special turn for psychology, he may endeavour to make out what is *the process in the mind of the officers*, through which the mind of the general comes to be conveyed to the soldiers. This is the sort of exercise which some professed Biblical theologians recommend or practise under the name or study of prophecy. It is not theological; for it does not aim at knowledge of the mind of God, nor of the matters of divine revelation. And it is not Biblical; for the Bible prophecy does not profess to be a declaration of the process in the mind of man. And, at best, it is not a study of *the thing* which the Bible itself describes as prophecy, and which is recognised under that name, as being of real and great importance, by the community of men seriously believing the religion of the Bible. In fact, it is not a study of prophecy in *any* real sense. Prophecy is *not*, in any real sense, *a process in the mind of man*; as the issuing of general orders to an army is not a process in the mind of officers delivering those orders. Prophecy, in every real sense, is always constituted by *communication of the mind of God*; as when a herald makes proclamation from the king. To inquire into the process in the mind of man, is not to study theology as given in divine revelation; it is only to study psychology, which may, or may not, result in some ascertainment as to the human constitution of a prophet,—anatomy of the human mind under some peculiar conditions.

The spiritual anatomy which we find in works on practical religion is a different species of exercise. It has the salutary intention and effect of self-knowledge, in preparing men for true knowledge of God, as they need to know Him, correspondingly to our condition and our wants. The exercise now under consideration has the very different tendency, to withdraw men's minds from the search for God in His truth to "curious questions" about man: as if the subjects of a king, upon receiving a royal proclamation, should by public teachers be invited to betake themselves, not to study of the king's mind thus made known, and of the evidence of its being really his, but to anatomising the heralds, in the hope of obtaining some new light upon the physiology of man's organism, through observing how it is affected—*after death*—by having been made the organ of a message from

the king. In justification of the vivisection of animals, a scientific interest is pleaded. We are not aware that any scientific interest is promoted by anatomy of prophets. Some think it has never added anything to real knowledge, but has occasioned considerable display of ignorance of the rational constitution of man. And perhaps it may not in the Judgment be accepted as a justification for leading men away from the substance of religion, the doctrines and laws, the promises and warnings of the word of God. But our present interest lies in this—that under that aspect of the matter which is directly and manifestly most important for Apologetics, the sort of exercise now under consideration, assuming the name of a study of prophecy, leads the mind completely *away from* prophecy. Yet the exercise is in favour and fashion among professed theologians, who bear to be peculiarly rational, and above all things Biblical, in their expositions and researches. It thus may come to be imagined by the unlearned, who are at the mercy of what happens to be in the air at the passing moment, that that sort of thing is what is meant by Christian study of prophecy; and that the Christian evidence of prophecy has some relation of dependence to that sort of thing. It therefore is right for us at the present stage to covenant with ourselves that we shall carefully avoid that sort of thing. We are inquiring whether there is here a revelation of God. On that question we will not look for light in speculating about processes—about which nothing is really known by us or others—in the mind of man. *The thing* about which we will inquire is, *communication of the mind of God*. We will not inquire what may have been the mysterious processes in the mind of man through which the divine revelation came. We will accept, as our part in this matter, not to anatomise the herald, but to examine his credentials, and consider the import of his proclamation. For the purpose of our inquiry is to ascertain whether, in the dearest interest of the people's life, there are indeed authentic messages from the King.

2. *Theories of the authorship of particular books.* Of these theories we now speak *in their historical connection with unbelieving criticism*; with its plainly manifested purpose in removing ancient landmarks, relatively to Isaiah and to

Daniel. The second part of the Book of Isaiah, from the 40th chapter to the close, is assigned to a prophet, sometimes described as *The Great Unknown*, of a later time than the son of Amoz: and the Book of Daniel is ascribed to authorship, no matter whose, long subsequent to the Babylonish captivity. An occasion for these opinions, regarding those two books, is constituted, *for the unbelieving mind*, by the fact that if, in accordance with the constant opinion of the Church of God, the books be owned as genuine writings of the real Daniel and the known Isaiah, then *it will be impossible to deny that in Scripture there is miracle of wisdom*, fulfilled prediction of the incalculable, *demonstrating the reality of supernatural revelation*. For in Daniel and in the second part of Isaiah there unquestionably are predictions of events which have taken place correspondingly to the forecast, and which it was plainly impossible for man's unaided wisdom to forecast in the times of those two men respectively. But certain critics had made up their minds that there is no supernatural, nor possibility of miracle; so that there cannot have really been any supernatural prediction. And "if reason be against a man, a man will be against reason." Consequently, those critics resolved that the second part of Isaiah shall be the work of some unknown author of a time as late as the Babylonish captivity, and that the Book of Daniel shall be a forgery of a much later date.

Having so resolved, they cast about for reasons in justification of the position which was assumed at the bidding of atheistic naturalism. The reasons may have weight in the judgment of men who sincerely believe in supernatural revelation of God through other Scriptures. Such men may have been led by the reasons to embrace or to entertain the opinion of the spuriousness of Daniel, and of the double authorship of Isaiah. We make no imputation of insincerity to those who profess to believe in the divinity of Scripture while entertaining these opinions as to those two books. But, on the other hand, we will not now discuss nor consider the reasons of the opinions as held by them. We will consider the opinions in connection with *that* reason, or motive, on account of which they were embraced by those unbelieving critics by whom Isaiah was condemned to be sawn asunder,

and Daniel was made infamous as a forger. And if the priest and the Levite keep steadily on one side of the road, we shall regard that as a direction to the other side, where truth lies bleeding from the thieves (now gone).

Into the reasons which have been found in justification of denial of unity of Isaiah and of genuineness of Daniel, we really do not need to inquire. For, as will appear presently, that denial does not materially affect the evidence of prophecy as a subject of our inquiry. The main strength of that evidence for supernatural revelation would continue in full force for demonstration on the ground of miraculous prediction, though it were proved historically that there were two Isaiahs and not one Daniel. On the other hand, at the present stage we have an interest in considering the opinions *in situ*, looking at them in *their historical connection with atheistic prepossession*. For, in the search for truth regarding an opinion, it is important for the inquirer to have his mind directed to the manner in which the opinion came to be formed. And in our inquiry it is of special importance to be distinctly aware of the part that has been played, and is being played, by an atheistic dogmatism under the name of literary and historical criticism. Here, therefore, once more we note the fact, that under the mask of a historical criticism of certain books, this and that man have really been ventilating their opinion that there is no God. In a round about way, Epicurus or Zeno has come into the field in the disguise of an infidel.

Here, too, we see occasion to say once more, that the criticism is ostensibly *incompetent*, because non-moral—if not, immoral. Non-moral seems a weak expression for description of a manifested readiness, if not proclivity, to think evil of good men, and believe in shameful falsehood of brave men and true. We refuse to own as qualified for the criticism of a moral system one who assumes as easily credible, almost a matter of course, that the great and holy soul which so gloriously shines through the second part of Isaiah is the home of a mean villainy of pretended prediction, wearing a false face of prophecy in the name of God, which (Deut. xviii. 19) the Mosaic law made punishable with death. In all that we know of the prophets historically, as matter of fact, there is nothing to necessitate and thereby justify such

vile imputation. There is everything to forbid, and rebuke, and condemn it. And we will regard the imputation as presumptive evidence of moral incapacity for judgment in this case on the part of those who make the imputation.

The prophets as known to us were professed servants of the living God, whose own lives were consistent with the profession. They spoke with great solemnity of earnestness, as delivering to men what they had received from the Lord. Their utterances are pervaded with a burning zeal for holiness and truth, and reverence for what is austere pure in morality as well as high and godlike in religion. Their oracular intimations of "things to come" are completely free from all appearance of charlatanism: showing no face of ghostly ambition, or of scheming and manœuvring for social or political or ecclesiastical influence through ostentation of supernaturalism, to overbear the soul of hearers by fatal fascinations of the unseen. They address themselves to the reason and the conscience, as well as the heart of those who hear them, always on behalf of an ideal of *the kingdom of God* among men, which now is seen to have been the highest ideal ever proposed to mankind. And what interest had they to serve by this? To the world as a whole their ideal was a completely strange thing, which might expose them to the world's rage on account of its unbending purity of loftiness, and which at the best would procure for them derision, appearing to that world as a merely chimerical hallucination of day-dreamers, deserving only ridicule or contempt of "practical" men. Nor could those prophets expect honour in their own country. According to tradition, Isaiah was sawn asunder before the times of literary and historical criticism. Jerusalem was to a proverb the slaughter-house of prophets. "Which of the prophets have not your father's persecuted?" (Acts vii. 52) said the proto-martyr of Christianity. And "the faithful Witness," Christ, had said before him (Matt. xxiii. 31), "Ye are the children of them which killed the prophets."

Why then, with *such* a prophet's "reward" in prospect from men, should they put on a false face of speaking in the name of God? History—all that we really know about them—makes them to have been sincere men. Literature—all that we really know about their writings and their speeches—is replete with internal evidence only of their sincerity and truth. The criticism which makes them impudently dishonest, like the lowest of heathen religious impostors, is a

contradiction of the whole of that history and literature which are the only real materials of criticism — our only sources of information regarding them and their work. The criticism in view is the judgment of a jaundiced eye, to which everything is yellow. And of such criticism there is only one auspicious aspect. As a “sign of the times,” it may serve to show that the end is not far off. Unless the world be wholly given over to strong delusion that it should believe a lie, the cause is lost which is bound up with the contention that the Bible is an unclean dishonest book of forgeries and impostures. The criticism which by implication makes it to be such thereby signs and seals its own death-warrant. “To the pure all things are pure.” And men of sense, who themselves are passably honest and clean-hearted, will come to perceive that—as appears in men’s treatment of God’s incarnate Word—the training of a scribe does not necessarily open the eyes of the blind; and that he exposes himself to a just suspicion of being blind in soul who sees a rotten heart in Daniel and a false face on Isaiah. They will believe that the prophets are honest, even though that should seem to imply that probably there is a God.

But, in the second place, having observed generally the incompetency of such criticism, we now observe, in special connection with these two books, the *futility* of the criticism in that, though its truth were admitted as against these books, the Scripture evidence of prophecy would remain in full force. The *raison d’être* of that criticism, its motive or impulsive cause of coming into existence, and self-assertion, is not any personal antipathy to Isaiah or Daniel, but hostility to the supposition that there is *in Scripture*, or *in the universe*, *any such thing* as prediction of the incalculable. For the same reasons the lie could be given to God on the day of judgment. And a main reason why at this point we refuse to make any defence of the unity of Isaiah or of the genuineness of Daniel, is that by going into any debate upon the disputed questions regarding those prophets, we should help to conceal from view the vitally essential fact, that these questions hardly touch the field of Bible evidence of prophecy; inasmuch as there is in the field abundantly sufficient material for the argument from prophecy on behalf of the

truth of Bible religion, quite independently of all conceivable questions about Isaiah and Daniel. For, apart altogether from these, the evidence is clear and abundant; and it is of such a kind that it never can be shaken.

Here, through futility of the criticism, there begins to be disclosed another aspect of its incompetency on the score of morality—*misrepresentation* of the case. The judge is reasonably suspected of moral unfitness for his office, blinding bias of partisanship, who does not look straight in the face of the “case” which is presented on behalf of the accused whom he condemns; and those who speak or act as if the case for prophecy on the ground of Scripture had depended wholly or mainly or much upon questions about Isaiah and Daniel, show that they either are ignorant of that “case” *as presented* on behalf of prophecy, or they deliberately ignore it; either that they cannot see it or that they will not, or that they have not even looked, perhaps have not so much as thought of looking, in the direction of it. Now the case is not a new thing under the sun, got up in a hurried alarm to meet a present crisis, or framed simply with a view to meet some new objections. It was prepared long ago by scholarly, able, honest men, who seriously had inquired into the matter for the purpose of ascertaining the truth of it. And it has been lying before the world for generations, so that no one professing scholarship relatively to the Bible, or undertaking to address his neighbours upon the subject of prophecy, can be held excusable for ignorance or ignoring of that case.

The contention of the case is that there is Scripture evidence of prophecy in the specific form of miraculous prediction, manifested foresight of the incalculable (we for the present leave out of account the wonder of wisdom in Scripture constituted by its giving a *real view* of the world, or, as Butler puts it, being “a history of the world as God’s world”). And we now have to consider whether the case does not remain in full force, the field of evidence as a whole unclouded and undisturbed, even on the supposition of its having been proved that there are two Isaiahs, and that the Book of Daniel is a forgery.

To begin with, we find that there is evidence of fulfilled prophecy, prediction of the incalculable, remaining in those

two books themselves, even if they have been so disgraced; as gold is found in drift and quartz which have been flung away by unskilful miners. Thus, in the first Isaiah, who is owned as having prophesied before the captivity, there is distinct prediction of the downfall of Babylon, which no man by his mere natural sagacity could have foreseen at the time. It is also understood by Christians generally, as it was by the apostles and by Christ, that the second part of Isaiah, "the great evangelical prophet," contains a glorious miraculous forecast of the definitive triumph of the militant kingdom of God in the new dispensation. But the critics may think that that was only a sublime rhapsodical preaching. Then, as for Daniel, though he should be brought as low in date as those critics would fain bring him in character, still his prophecy looks far down beyond that lowest date into the incalculable future. Suppose that the Assyrian and the Persian empire have given place to the Græco-Macedonian, still there is the Roman. At the time of Constantine the Great we saw Nebuchadnezzar's majestic image upon its iron feet. And we knew that the feet had ten toes. But it was Daniel that had come from a far distant past to show us a far more distinct future; to show us in that future, beyond the ruin of the last world-empire, in the fifth monarchy of the Son of man from the Eternal of Days, that sisterhood of nationalities in Christendom which are a new thing under the sun. And consequently John the Divine, in his Apocalyptic vision of the future, has only to expand the prophecy of Daniel in order to give a forecast of the world's destiny in connection with God's kingdom to the end of time; a forecast as distinct as Agassiz or Owen could have seen relatively to man's first appearance upon earth in the geologic prophecies and types. That is a fact, though the Book of Daniel should be fifty times a forgery.

We now pass from those prophets, remembering that they are only two, while of other prophets they are many, with Moses and Elias at their head. And what we now observe is that in those other prophets there is *the widely spacious field* of prophecy, as of a firmament with stars and constellations which never can be moved, nor in reality obscured by any noise or dust that may be raised down here in a corner about

Isaiah and Daniel. Quite independently of these two, there are in those other prophets these three things which make a case for prophecy that can never be really moved. (1) There is what we shall call *a horoscope of nations*, distinct prediction of the future of those heathen communities to which the chosen people were contiguous, from the call of Abraham down to the close of Old Testament prophecy. (2) As to the chosen people, *the Church in the world*, her future was always the theme of distinct prediction ever coming into fulfilment, from the first gospel preaching in Eden down to the death of the last of the apostles. And (3) as to *the Messiah* or Christ, the *Old Testament as a whole* (Luke xxiv. 27) was full of Him; there are a considerable number of *specific predictions* which are so many evidences of a supernatural foreknowledge of Him through their manifest fulfilment in Him alone; and of prophetic indications, which we may speak of as *particular "marks"* which go to identification of Him as in converging lines of a circumstantial evidence, there have been reckoned more than a hundred.

The evidence of prophecy natively tends to growing clearness in the lapse of time, the evolution of the ages bringing the fulfilment of prediction into view. But in the primitive Church time there were special circumstances which led the Christian to give a prominence to this branch of evidence which it does not now receive. On the one hand, through the competition of heathen miracles, real or unreal, the evidence of miracle was not then so decisive in effect of conviction as it now is; and, on the other hand, in a measure far beyond what has been exhibited in the following ages, in that first age the Old Testament was the Scripture which was fed upon as the daily bread of life to the children of the kingdom. And now it may serve to point the matter further, if we consider how it was placed by Christ Himself. Some even of those who attach a high value to prophecy as a proclamation of principles, are found exhibiting a tendency to depreciate its value as a source of proofs through miracle in prediction of the incalculable. And the production of the argument from prophecy by Christians may dispose such men rather to think meanly of the judgment of those Christians than to bring their own judgment into the exercise of a

serious consideration of the argument. But of those who at all think seriously about such matters, there are few who will not be influenced by the fact, that the question as we have stated it is not of our raising, even under prescription of Moses (Deut. xviii. 19–21); but that it was so raised and pressed with special reference to fulfilment of prediction in Himself by that prophet of Nazareth, who is honoured as beyond all question far the greatest teacher that ever lived, even by men who do not believe in Him as God, nor trust Him as Redeemer.

We saw that He predicted His own resurrection on the third day: three times distinctly to His own disciples, and twice enigmatically in the hearing of His enemies. There may be a vague impression that the wonder of the prediction is diminished by the shortness of the time between it and the event foretold. If the event be clearly incalculable, the element of time does not enter into the argument. Elijah's prediction, folded in his bidding Naaman wash in the Jordan, was as truly miraculous, because as clearly supernatural, as if it had been uttered a thousand years before. The incalculableness of the resurrection of Christ on the third day is quite clear. And His prediction of it before the event was as distinct as the articulation of it in the Apostles' Creed this hour. The conditions, then, of the argument from prophecy were complied with in that case.

His manner of dealing with that particular case, to the effect of placing His view of the general question beyond all doubt, appears in His own repeated statement in His last utterances to the disciples before His death. First, after washing the disciples' feet, He said, with immediate reference (ver. 12) to the circumstance of the betrayal (John. xiii. 19), "Now I tell you before it is come to pass, that when it is come to pass ye may believe that I am He." Second (John xiv. 29), when they were seated at the table, and now with express reference (ver. 28) to His "going to the Father," He said, "Now I have told you before it comes to pass, that when it is come to pass ye might believe." That places His view of the question in abundant clearness of light, and we will follow up the matter to its close.

Two generations after, one of those who heard Him wrote

(John xx. 8, 9) how it went with himself and Peter upon the occurrence of the great event. Upon hearing the women's report that the sepulchre was empty, they hastened out to see with their own eyes. And then, proceeds the record, "he *saw* and *believed*." John adds, "For as yet *they knew not the Scriptures*, that He must rise again from the dead." We remember that later in that same day Christ Himself showed the Emmaus two that they *ought* to have known this from the Scriptures: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke xxiv. 25-27). So, in the evening of that day, after discovering Himself to the ten (Luke xxiv. 45, 46), "then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved the Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." It thus appears that Peter and John, when "they knew not the Scriptures," so as to see in them a prediction of the incalculable, were giving evidence, not of peculiar perspicuity or spirituality of mind in them, but of their being "fools, and slow of heart to believe." It also appears how a man may come to *understand* a prediction through the fulfilment of it (even a Philistine will understand a riddle when he learns the solution). But the main point for our purpose in those words of Christ is that, while prediction of the incalculable is proof of supernatural revelation, there was abundant prediction of His incalculable resurrection, not only in His own words which He spoke before His death, but also, and especially, in the sure "prophetic word" of Old Testament Scripture hundreds of years before He began to live on earth.

We have not reached the point of inquiring for ourselves whether in fact there are, in the Old Testament, predictions of Christ which were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. But here we see the fact (of which, indeed, there was hardly any need of proof) that Christ and His apostles *believed* that there are. And the fact, so obvious and simple, is of commanding importance in the question of Apologetics, whether the argu-

ment from prophecy, as miracle of prediction, may, without perverse unreason, be disregarded or made light of as being only an idiosyncratic specialty of individual Christians. *That argument lies at the foundation of Christendom, in the person of Christ and His apostles.* In their person *Christianity* is clearly, strongly, irreversibly committed to maintenance of the position that *the Old Testament, as a whole*, is one great miraculous prediction of Christ and Christianity in the New.

(2.) *Of providence: (the world in general).*

The meaning of the argument from prophecy is *Providence: prædixit quia prædestinavit*—he who foretold has sovereignly foreordained. This is what Nebuchadnezzar was made to learn through so strange a schooling: that Daniel's God is the true God Most High, who "*doeth according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth.*" It is thus that "*He knoweth the end from the beginning,*" because the beginning is Himself, not only in His being and in His power, but in His free sovereign determination, "*the counsel of His own will*" (Eph. i. 11). Prophecy, therefore, is vitally important, not only as directing the mind to anticipation of "*things to come*" in the future, but also, and especially, because at the present it maintains a living faith and hope in God, as *now* freely "*working all in all*"—in other words, maintains in lively exercise that working dependence upon God which is the living foundation of all reality of religion in the soul.

In connection with Christ and the new kingdom of God, prophecy exhibited *the universality* of sovereign Providence, so that (Amos iii. 3–7) when a Hebrew said, "*Can two walk together except they be agreed?*" he did not mean the ecclesiastical platitude that there cannot be true union without unity, nor the scientific commonplace that there can be no event without an adequate cause. He meant the theological truth as to Providence, which He had learned in the school of prophecy, that, while the unity is in the true Israel, the one adequate cause of all events is that Israel's true living Almighty God. "*Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it? Surely the Lord God will*

do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets."

As Israel's connection with the world went on extending, so the prophetic intimations as to Providence went on expanding. So that as far as the natural eye could see the world, so far the eye of faith was led to see a providence of God: "The Lord reigneth: let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof." The whole universe was thus made to be a living temple of the King, not only over all things reigning for His own glory, but in all things working omnipotently, "according to the counsel of His own will." In the structure of the tabernacle of testimony the hand of Aholiab and Bezaleel was seen, not only in the tabernacle itself, but in the two curtains which covered and sheathed it. And if, to our view, the high priest in the innermost shrine was the mediator, and the priesthood in the sanctuary service were Israel, then we see, further, not only the political fabric of the Hebrew commonwealth in the inner curtain, but also, in the outer curtain the general political fabric of the world. That world contained the Church of the seed of promise, though it should be as a captive with a blessing, like Joseph in Egypt, or the little Hebrew maid in the Syrian house of Naaman. And so, in order to show clearly even the "special" providence (*specialis*) of Jehovah toward His own people, prophecy had to show distinctly His general providence as governing the world.

Prophecy showed that, so as to evidence the truth of Israel's religion, in two ways: (1) generally, by wonder of wisdom, in *giving a real view* of the world (from a true central point); (2) specially, by the miracle of *predicting the incalculable* in the future of the world. That future of the world becomes known in course of time from history, independently of prophecy. We thus come to be in a position of ability to compare the ideal world of prophetic prediction with the real world of historical fact. When the one corresponds to the other, then the prophetic idea is seen to be a divine decree of "the King eternal, immortal, invisible," securing the realisation of His own ideas. (Neander saw this "Platonism" in the theology of Wycliffe: it really is in every doctrine of a sovereign Providence.)

The knowledge thus evinced by fulfilment is "foreknowledge absolute." It is not a mere *scientia simplicis intelligentiæ*—that is, comprehension of ideal possibilities—which might run into *calculation* of the future actuality from the present. It is a *scientia visionis*—that is, seeing the future actuality as made sure by *sovereign will* in "the determinate counsel of God," "who calleth things that are not as things which are," namely, God in Christ, "of whom, and to whom, and by whom are all things," "who was before all things, and by whom all things consist," "the Alpha and the Omega," "the I AM who was, and is, and shall be" (not the Egyptian Isis, "*thing* that was, and is, and shall be").

1. Generally, *wonder of wisdom*. A *real view* of the world is most completely involved in a "history of the world as God's world." Lucretius can attain to some view of that unity which is involved in a system of nature; but his world is dark and lifeless, since it has not the living God, who "worketh all in all," so that the world shall be radiant, "white and glistering," through His indwelling, "filling all in all" with omnipresence of His veiled glory.

The prophecy has not in it such things as comets and eclipses, which can be *calculated* by Chaldean astrologers. It refers to processes of nature simply as illustrations of the ordinary providence of God, taking care to show that "laws of nature" are *statutes* of Jehovah, or constitutions by decree of God. The wonder of wisdom appeared in the prophetic representations of *that* unruly world of *mankind*, which, ever since Babel, had been more and more confusedly incoherent, notwithstanding the silent reproaches of the stars. That "army of heaven" is orderly in marching. Those citizens of the sky are law-abiding. Their progression is a witness for God as the author of order. But on that account the prophetic prediction, being of the incalculable, has regard, not to "the host of heaven," but "to the inhabitants of the earth." *When the view has been given to us*, it may appear to us a very easy thing to attain to a real view of that world of men, as it was easy to find America after Columbus. So, when a man comes to understand the Newtonian view of the stellar universe, he may persuade himself that this is what the stars, in their silent psalm of stable and orderly progression, have been all along

declaring to him. But history speaks differently in what it tells us of Cartesian vortices and of Copernican cycles and epicycles. It may be easy, when we have been placed at the true centre, thence to perceive the grand harmonious unity of all that movement multitudinous; to hear the "music of the spheres," which has been filling space with omnipresent praises ever since the morning stars began to sing together. But the wonder is in man's *attaining to* the true centre, where he shall find himself no longer "in wandering mazes lost," but rejoicing in the freedom of perceiving "a mighty maze, yet not without a plan." And history shows that the difficulty of attaining to a central point of view, that shall command the view of the whole, so as to see the unity in all the endless multiplicity, can be overcome by man only through teaching from the throne of universal dominion.

Let work bear witness. *In point of fact, a real view of the world of mankind as a whole never entered the mind of man excepting through the prophets of Jehovah.* The world, without the aid of prophecy, tried to form a real view of itself as a whole. But it failed; as if a child should endeavour to see the whole family history in a mirror, where it can see only its own perplexed little face. Here, again, the world by its wisdom knew not man. In order to see this, we need not look at the "barbarian" times of the Chaldeans and the Persians. We will look at the "civilised" empires of Greece and Rome.

These were in a sense truly and highly civilised. They had not the ultimate, the alone true civilisation, which appears in the completed formation of social manhood and womanhood. That is reserved for the Last Monarchy of the Son of man, restoring in man the image of His maker, which in outcome is a new and true kingdom of God, establishing itself among the sons and daughters of men, *in ecclesia*, through their social affections. But Greece and Rome had a civilisation which was real and high of its kind; though its kind was not the highest, that is, spiritual, but only natural. There never was, nor can be, in the world, a higher condition of the human intellect than it attained in the Athens of the days of Socrates and Sophocles. "Virtue" in the good sense of the term, as meaning, pith and marrow of manhood in relation to the

outward matters of time, was in its acme in the early Roman republic. Ancient Rome is at this hour, through her civilisation of law, of disciplined force, empress of the civilised world. Justinian is at the foundation of its codes. And there never shall be a people, in that Christendom which is destined (Rev. xi. 15) to be coextensive with the world, that will not in this connection look back upon the Roman senates and consuls and emperors as upon

Those dead, but sceptred sov'rans who still rule,
Our spirits from their urns.

Still more comprehensive, because more profound, is the Greek empire of intellectual civilisation. In art and literature Greece is at this moment supreme, as when Homer set the glorious model, and Aristotle gave the law, and Phidias moulded "the human form divine," and Apelles drew it, and there arose in air those fabrics of a noble simple beauty, which are at once the admiration and the despair of architectural genius in all following generations. But one thing was wanting to give life to that Pygmalion. And Prometheus did not find it in the sacred spark he stole from heaven. The flame of life came from heaven; but it was through "the door," by a *lawful* way, of righteous peace with God, through the hand of the prophets, to be transmitted from their hand by the apostles. It was not superlative genius, it was the Son of man, that gave to the Stratford rustic his "one touch of nature, making the whole world kin." A *real view* of the world of mankind as one whole is peculiar to the Christian civilisation of both Testaments; and it first appeared as a full rounded moon of promise in the *prophetic* representation of that world.

We have in our possession the essays of those Greek and Roman civilisations, through their learned able men, toward forming such a view. Herodotus, "the father of history," who had ransacked the world's treasures of self-knowledge, gives his view of the populations of the earth in connection with the Persian invasion of Greece; a view that reads like a very noble, simple prose epic of civilisation itself, in the climax of its pathetically wonderful contending, as that of unconquerable soul, against mere material vastness of mag-

nificence of barbarism. Diodorus the Sicilian, Greek in culture, Roman in citizenship and feeling, set forth the world of men as seen from the view-point of Roman imperialism, in a work which posterity has entitled, *Library of Universal History*. And Roman Justin has a vigorous sketch with a similarly comprehensive purpose. Herodotus wrote near the time of the Babylonish captivity, and the two others, near the time of the first coming of Christ. But none of them had the true central point of view. Their centre was only themselves. And neither Thebes, nor Babylon, nor Susa, nor Athens, nor Rome, was a true *ὀμφάλη γαίης*, *umbilicus terrarum*. Their attempt to see the world of mankind as a whole was in its very nature vain; as if one should endeavour to gain a full view of a great city, not from a pinnacle of the temple, commanding the view of all the houses, and of all the hearts within them, but from a window of his own private residence, on the ground floor, looking out upon the fashionable main street of the town. A plain proof of this is the fact that mankind as a whole cannot *now* be seen from the ancient heathen, nor from any really heathen point of view. Any one who tries it will find that the view-point is eccentric, so that the view from it *has* to be but partial, distorted, sectarian. No educated man in our day, intending to give a catholic-human view of the world, would so much as dream of attempting it from the view-point of Justin, Diodorus, or Herodotus. Thucydides and Tacitus, confessedly great ancient heathen masters of history, had not, even in appearance, really any view of "the whole world."

On the other hand, the historian who said, "I never understood history till I knew Christ," only gave one pathetic expression to the general fact, that the Bible has in it a real view of the totality of mankind, expanding out of the clear distinctness of its table of ancient nations (Gen. x.). There is no other view really possible at this hour. No man, whether he believe the Bible or not, *can* give any real view of catholic humanity in its unity of multiplicitous being and movement but what is substantially coincident with *that* view, which was never heard of in the world till the world had received it through the apostles from the prophets.

It is remarkable that this view, upon which mankind is daily being restored into lost unity, the dislocated and scattered limbs of humanity becoming reorganised into a living corporate whole, should have reached the world through a people which was outwardly secluded in its home as in a wonderful natural sanctuary of isolation from the world; a people, too, whose natural temper, under influence of exclusive privileges and of geographical seclusion, was the most narrowly and intensely sectarian under heaven. The reason of that, no doubt, is, that the seclusion and isolation, working such sectarianism into the carnal mind of those who were the seed of Abraham only according to the flesh, served, on the other hand, in the mind and heart and life of those who were "Israelites indeed," to cherish as in a meet soil, until the fulness of the times, those catholic principles of redemption, and reconciliation of man to God, through which all the families of the earth were to be blessed (Eph. ii. 10-18). Through the spiritual seed of Abraham, Canaan, a sanctuary of seclusion, became a cloistered missionary institute, going, in the appointed season, with the gospel of the kingdom to all nations.

That which made prophecy thus to have in it a real view of mankind is, that it had a *really central point of view*, the only really central view-point, namely, in the providential sovereignty of the living God, governing all events in order to one end. That end is the "restitution of all things" (Acts iii. 21), restoring the shattered unity of the moral world through Christ. This "restitution," which was the mission of the Son of man, is the purpose ever widening in outgoing manifestation through the circuit of the suns. To speak of such a "purpose" that is not of controlling providence, would be to utter incoherent absurdity. A naturalistic "history of civilisation" is a dead thing, like the *rerum natura*, although—which is not likely—the historian should have an inspiration of the muse of history like the Lucretian gift of noble song. It is sad to see an angel sent to feed the swine of Epicurus. The matter is not much mended by infusion and effusion of the sentimental pantheism which can speak of a "destiny of (impersonal) humanity" in "a colossal man" (where the nonsense is transparent). But the real view is abidingly installed in the

Christian mind, and, *e.g.*, finds utterance in the noble dual epic of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*.

The real view of a commanding unity, realised in the ("monarchy") sovereignty of the living God in history, was fitted to impress and move deeply the more intelligently thoughtful minds in heathendom, especially through an aspect of divinely comprehensive tenderness (cp. Acts xvii. 24—28) which appeared in the Scriptures as an all-pervading principle of God's kingdom among men. We remember how strong a hold it laid on the powerful mind of the greatest king of Babylon. Cyrus, too, was under the influence of that same view in ordaining (2 Chron. xxxvi. 23) the restoration of Jehovah's temple in Jerusalem. And it may not have been without affinity for the imperial intellect of the great Alexander, when, according to tradition, he, in his devastating progress through the East, spared the holy city, and favoured the peculiar people whose high priest had come forth with his train to show this conqueror in the sacred books the prophecies regarding himself. But any such occasional impressions were evanescent *naturally* as the morning cloud, and as the early dew. There is to be a real abiding efficacy of the belief on God in history that shall accomplish a realisation of true unity of mankind in the bonds of peace. But that is not to be looked for as a result of influences that have been found operative among mankind apart from effectual working of this professed revelation. It has not been found apart from personal belief on the living God, causing men to come together upon a common way of peace, as coming by one Spirit unto the Father.

For in the world's heart, notwithstanding rebuke and chastisement of Babel confusion and humiliating dispersion, there still is a rival to God's throne. Though the fool have been brayed in a mortar, the folly is not yet brayed out of him. And so the providence, which is the open secret of prophecy, has to show itself as a "*powerful*" government of all creatures and their actions. The world-empires could not think of anything nobler than the seeking of their own aggrandisement. The highest ideal of virtue among the heathens did not soar beyond a sort of deification of the state. Taking that as the ideal, it may be that the "virtue" of early Roman citizenship was as high as can be looked for on the earth. But that was

not even real patriotism, which is a rational affection and reverence toward one's own country analogous to the obedience which children owe their own parents "in the Lord." The heathen public spirit was a blind, idolatrous devotion to the community to which a heathen happened to belong, irrespectively of due fear of God and regard for man elsewhere. And so the empires sought every one itself. The world and its good and its "glory" (!) was to be for the Assyrians, for the Persians, for the Greeks, for the Romans, according as this or that section of mankind happened to have the upper hand. For the living God, the real King of earth as well as heaven, there was to be nothing; and as to the rest of mankind who did not happen to be of the thus dominant section—"the dogs do eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table."

It is not only that the head was sick, the heart too was faint (Isa. i. 6). That world-empire, through all the round of ages from Babylon to Rome, was a worldly selfishness. And prophecy had, for the empires and for the kingdoms, its warning that God is the Supreme Ruler, and will clearly and finally show this "in the fulness of the times" (which are in His hand). One of the ways in which God occasionally gave "signs" of His controlling presence and power was through miracle, like that of the fire upon Elijah's altar, and the deliverances of Daniel and the Three Children, and the intimation of Belshazzar's doom by the writing on the wall. But even in such cases we see miracle *of wisdom*, prediction of the incalculable, blending with the wonder of power. And a consoling and restraining hope, in times of gloomiest depression outwardly, must have been powerfully aided and sustained in the hearts of believing men by that *real view* of mankind as a whole, which, as appearing in Jehovah's prophecies, practically meant that *God was looking on* with those eyes which are as a flame of fire, running to and fro through the whole earth.

2. *Specially*: the miracle of predicting the incalculable in the future of the world. It cannot be too often repeated that the "case" for evidence of prophecy on the ground of the history of the world is immovably strong independently of Daniel and Isaiah (though they should

be silent the stones would cry out). Other prophets declared the destiny of *all the communities adjacent to Israel—Israel's "world"*—in predictions which have been formed accurately corresponding to the event. It is to be specially noted that these predictions are not vague indeterminate preachings at heathenism, with denunciation of judgments which might have been foreseen by human sagacity. The prophetic manner of speaking in the name of the Lord involved on the part of the prophets a solemn repudiation of the view that their forecast was derived from sagacity of their own. And the predictions were not of a conveniently vague generality, but were specific and characteristic, such as to individualise the community and the event, and to render detection inevitable in case of imposture or untruth. The particular predictions to which the apologists appeal in this relation are not mere selections from a heap of generalities, on account of some chance resemblance of this prediction to that event. They occur in a business-like manner in the record of a varied prophetic activity of real life, and are as distinctly pointed as if an archer had been visible shooting at a mark—so that if he always hit the mark he must have *intended* to do so.

We ought to pause here in view of a "great sight:" the prophetic utterance simply as it is in the Scripture record. *There never was anything in the world that in the least resembled it.* Not a mere isolated prediction like Virgil's *Pollio*, but a serious business-like dealing with the whole future. Here *in the wilderness* is a burning bush.

They *specify the communities*—respectively, Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, Edom, Egypt, Tyre. *The occurrence which they predict is specific*, individual, such as no human sagacity could have defined in the future from the present and the past. And *the specifications are discriminating*, so as to make identification doubly sure (and, to a pretender, doubly dangerous). Thus for *Egypt* there is predicted a perpetual abjectness of condition, markedly contrasted with her present and her past, *but* she is not doomed to utter destruction. This precisely is what history will show in both respects. *Tyre*, on the other hand, is foredoomed, notwithstanding a present greatness famous in the world to virtual *annihilation*: that, too, history will show precisely in the event. The most

remarkable sample is the prediction of *Edom's* future. The fulfilment was not till generations after the prophecy. At the time of the utterance the event was the most unlikely thing in the world—namely, an utter overthrow of Edom *by the hand of the Jews*. For the Jews were then to all appearance languishing into extinction as a power, while Edom was flourishing in pride of strength. In the whole series there is not one forecast more markedly characterised by specification such as in guesswork would have been avoided most carefully. And in the nature of such things there could not be a more striking completeness of detailed correspondence of the event in history to the prediction uttered long before. It may be added as to *Judah's* own captivity, with restoration at the end of seventy years, that, while the event was dependent upon the will of a fluctuating heathen imperialism, yet the prediction was so distinct that a genuine Daniel would have no difficulty (Dan. ix. 2) in “understanding by books the number of the years.” The prophecies regarding those extra-Israel communities are carefully exhibited in the words of Scripture, along with historical proofs of the fulfilment in every case, by Dr. Keith, *Evidence of Prophecy*.

The evidence of these prophecies can never be in any way affected by ascertainments regarding Isaiah and Daniel, any more than they can be by ascertainments regarding Junius and Ossian. In order to see the peculiar significance of the argument at this point, we ought to remember that the fulfilment in the case of those heathen communities is not dependent upon the truth of the Bible religion. The fulfilment is an historical fact, as also is the utterance of the prediction before the event; a coincidence or correspondence which would remain though the Bible religion were found to be false. If the Bible religion were found to be false, the result would be that those predictions would have to be ascribed to some other God than Jehovah. (We put the matter hypothetically, at the expense of seeming irreverence, in order to bring out the point.) For what follows from correspondence of event to prediction is, not simply predetermination, such as could result from fatalistic necessity, but predestination, which is the action distinctively of a sovereign purposing will (predixit quia predestinavit). In the case of prophecies regarding the Church and regarding Christ, the event has a special point of showing that the Bible religion is of God. The speciality in the case of prophecies

regarding heathen communities is, that the event by itself has not in it this implication; so that what in this case comes into view is simply the effect of prediction as evincing *divinity*; supernatural forecast, irrespectively of the quality of the event foretold, demonstrated through its *correspondence* with the prediction.

The circumstance that the predictions regarding communities have to do with *free agency*, shows that the event is *absolutely* incalculable. The Chaldean astrologers might really predict eclipses and comets, and the forecast might appear supernatural to peoples unaware of the resources of science for calculation within the domain of physical law, but free agency is beyond that domain; and a real horoscope of human destiny is thus incompetent excepting for One who "*doeth according to His will*" among the inhabitants of the earth "and not only in the army of heaven." Nor is the forecast of prophecy of the same species with the *political* "weather prophecy" of sagacious human divination of "the signs of the times." It is really of a different species, not simply of a higher degree. It resembles rather the *meteorological* "weather prophecy" of science in storm-signalling; in this respect, that the forecast in that weather prophecy is *not vague*, regarding merely the *sort of weather* in a season, but *specifie*, regarding *rain, wind, frost, at a particular date*. Sir John Herschell (tract in a posthumous volume) states that real weather prophecy is not competent for man beyond perhaps two days. In New Zealand, where the meteorological observations made in every part of the country are telegraphed to the capital every day, a skilled expert will not venture on weather prophecy beyond twenty-four hours. The forecast of Biblical prophecy ranges freely from a day (as in Naaman's case), from one second (as in the miracle "rise up and walk"), to a thousand or six thousand years!

Further, in weather prophecy, which is incompetent, the event is not absolutely incalculable. The wind, from which the human spirit takes its name (*spiritus, pneuma, ruach*), though to common apprehension it "bloweth where it listeth," is yet really in the domain of physical law (witness Maury, *Physical Geography of the Sea*). But the action of man is *absolutely* incalculable, as being beyond that domain. That

is to say, with reference to a *specific* event, *what particular thing* a man will *do*. The action of the wind is dependent upon *material* conditions, mechanical and chemical, which can be weighed and measured so that the result of them shall be foreseen through calculation. The core of human action is in a (free) *spirit*, whose *particular action* can no more be foreseen by finite intelligence than if man had been that Supreme Spirit of whom Isaiah said, "Thou art a God that hidest Thyself." The prophet's weeping as he looked on the face of Hazael was thus of a piece with God-man's weeping over Jerusalem. The *supernatural* was as real in the forecast as it is in creation of a world.

The question is not about the sort of thing a man will do, but about the *particular action*. If we know his *character*, we know what will be the *character* of his action and career, and may forecast his fortunes and his influences as likely to arise out of that. But *what particular thing* a man shall do, can be known to only infinite wisdom. And it can be foreseen by Omniscience only because it is foreordained by Omnipotence. What particular thing shall be done by his most intimate life-long associate an hour after this, Ahithophel cannot know any more than he can raise the dead.

The prophets foretold the action, not only of individuals, but of communities. Regarding the community, what they foretold was not vaguely, an indeterminate lot in the future, but specifically, a particular action, or definite course of action or experience. And the forecast ranged freely over time. Let us picture to ourselves as a meteorological problem:—*given*, complete ignorance of science, to produce an exact forecast of the weather and aspect of the sea and sky, from the view-point of mid-Atlantic at noon of Jan. 1st, 1999. In this case the forecast is *ideally* possible for a creature, because the action of the elements is calculable, being within the dominion of physical law. But the event in Bible prophecy is dependent on the *absolutely* incalculable element of spirit; while the spirits, in the case of communities,—kingdoms or empires,—are multitudinous as the waves of the Atlantic. Suppose that there *is* a prophetic horoscope of communities? The mind from which it emanates must have been, not only present at their birth, but *ruling* in their history. The "star" of their destiny is in the bosom's counsel of the eternal will of Omnipotence.

(3.) "*Special*" providence concerning the Church.

There is a distinction between "special" and "particular" providence. "Particular" has reference to the *sphere* of providence,—extending to *every* event, even the sparrow's fall. "Special" has reference to the *design* of providence, to make events concur in accomplishing a purpose beyond them, as God makes all things to work together for good to them that love Him. Abstractly, there might be various purposes in relation to which providence thus is "special;" *e.g.* to humble the pride of Pharaoh, a particular result on which the action of the plagues is made to bear as a cannonade in the general sieges of Mansoul. But for study of Scripture, we ought to learn from Scripture itself what is *the* specialty to be recognised as the ulterior end in view of providence, even when its operation is in the general world. Under guidance of Scripture, where providence is seen to have "wheels within wheels," it is possible to represent the specialty variously, in subordination to the *chief* end of all. Thus in addition to "general" providence, some set forth various *degrees* of specialty,—*e.g.* "special" providence, regarding *the Church*; "more special" (*magis specialis*), regarding *Christ*; and even, "most special" (*maxima specialis*), regarding His glorification as Redeemer. The restriction of the expression "special providence" to designation of God's peculiar care over the Church in world history, thus really implies a theological dogma. That use of the word is in some measure conventional. But the convention is convenient for us, who are not dogmatising, but inquiring. It serves to define a line of inquiry for us at the stage we now have reached.

Epicurus allowed men to suppose that there may have been a God who, after creating the world, did not go on to sustain and to govern it, but left it to be self-sustained and self-governed, which perhaps He might have done if He had been Epicurus—or an ostrich (or a Rousseau). Aristotle placed the sphere of providence beyond the moon; perhaps afraid that in nearer proximity it might disturb the museum of a certain enthusiastic naturalist, not much given to worship. It may be abstractly conceivable, ideally though not really possible, that Israel's Redeemer should have restricted His

governmental action to the Theocracy, leaving the world of mankind without a providential control of its action on His part. In that case, the tabernacle would be without an outer curtain. We have seen that it was not so. But now we will restrict our attention to what is within that outer curtain,—the nation of Israel, regarded as “holy” to the Lord (Ex. xix. 6), a visible Church. That nation, it is maintained by the Apostle of the Gentiles (Phil. iii. 3), is now constituted by Christendom; and the claim is sustained by the Apostle of the Circumcision (1 Pet. ii. 9). But we for the present shall restrict our attention to the Old Testament Church or nation as a ground for our study of “special” providence in illustration of prophecy, or of prophecy as illustrated by “special” providence.

In Ezekiel’s vision there were wheels within wheels. In Egypt and in Canaan, God, carrying out His covenant purpose of redeeming love to the seed of Abraham, dealt with the Egyptians and the Canaanites correspondingly to their distinct relations *to Him* as *their* ruler and judge. But while He did so, He made all His action toward those peoples, and all *their* action toward Him and His peculiar people, to work for accomplishment of His purpose of redeeming love to this people distinctively His own. *To trust in that providence was the best exercise of Israel’s life of faith* (Heb. ii. 4; cp. Rom. i. 17; Gal. iii. 11; Heb. x. 38). And to enable them to trust in it was one great intended use of His prophecies regarding the Church.

The outward Israel of Christ’s time (John viii. 34–44) and of Paul’s (Rom. ix.–xi.) made a literally ruinous mistake, which perhaps is Æschylean Greek for mortal sin (*ἀμαρτία*, “missing the mark,” is Greek for the Hebrew “Israel is a deceitful bow”), in making the favoured Israel to consist in the seed of Abraham according to *the flesh*. They thus far coincided in their view with that of those *other* “historical critics” who, as we have seen, finding what *they* bring, make the ultimate cause of Israel’s religious history to have been something in the *nature* of an Israelite as distinguished from the nature of other men, namely, a peculiar natural religiousness. The view is profoundly antagonistic to the Bible view. According to the Bible view, Israel’s *nature* is that which appeared in

Esau—Edom—the first-born, *who forfeited the blessing* by his carnality, and who afterwards, in pursuance of the doom of later prophecy, was utterly overthrown by the younger brother's hands. Israel's nature is also seen (Gal. iii. 4) in that *other* elder brother who "persecuted" Isaac in his infancy (witness Acts iii.—ix.), and thus brought upon himself the calamity (cp. Acts xiii. 46, xxviii. 25–28) of being outcast from the home in which he by birth had been only a slave (Eph. ii. 3). Both Ishmael and Esau obtained a temporal blessing through their being outwardly connected with the one true seed. But the outward Israel has for eighteen centuries been a bye-word, a hissing, an astonishment; and as such has been a powerfully impressive sample of evidence of fulfilled prophecy. For that people has been an awful illustration of what they might have known (Rom. ix.; cp. Ex. ix. 16), from what was said to Pharaoh in their hearing, the sovereignty of the providence of God in history, always "doing according to His *will*," "He will have mercy upon whom He *will* have mercy, and whom He *will* He hardeneth."

When St. Paul (Gal. iii. 16) distinguishes between "seed" and "seeds," he is not the slave of his Rabbinism, but the master of it. He brings bread and honey out of the lion, where a worldly critic might have found an Apollyon. And the strength and sweetness he has brought is this: Formally, or in words, the distinction of a "seed" from "seeds" is strewn upon the face of revelation; and corresponding to that there is distinction of a seed, *the* seed, from all other seeds,—a distinction that is real, essential, fundamental, pervading the life's life of the whole revealed system of salvation by redeeming sovereign grace.

This seed, *the* seed, one in essence, may in manifestation be multitudinous as the (cold and fruitless) sand of the sea-shore, or the (radiant, glorious) stars of the firmament; and, indeed, is the true "dispersion seed" (λόγος σποραδικός), as Justin Martyr might have seen, if he had left his philosopher's gown (and coloured spectacles) behind him when he entered the school (Matt. xi. 28, 29) of Christ. The vital matter is its *unity*. That unity is not merely ideal (Platonic), but real and historical (Christian). It is not in one or all of the "five universals" of nominalism, but in a person who is a righteous servant of the Lord (Isa. liii. 11). "He shall see His seed," "that He may be the first-born of many brethren" (cp. Heb. ii. 8–13). This one seed (cp. Isaac) is itself supernatural, of promise, in covenant,

and its history is so bound up with miraculous prediction as to constitute a very great historical evidence of prophecy.

The American aloe, we have heard, blossoms only once in a hundred years. We now have to think of a blossom (passion flower) which appeared on Calvary from a seed which had been planted (Gen. iii. 15) in Eden. The first gospel preaching was of an enmity between the serpent with his seed (John viii. 44), and on the other hand a blessed seed of the woman. This blessed seed was destined to be, though wounded in conflict, yet victorious in the end. That was the gospel of promise. This *protevangelium* was a miraculous prediction, as appears in the event of Calvary, with resurrection from the dead and salvation by grace, upon the footing of justification by faith only (*solâ*). And that promise ran through the whole Old Testament dispensation (Heb. xi., xii.), connecting all its prophecies into one as with an invisible thread of finest gold, the golden wisdom of God (whose word is "tried") in a providence which is most "holy, wise, and *powerful*."

In the later age of prophecy, the distinctly prophetic epoch, it appeared with great plainness that the people of God were in a strict sense *living upon prediction*, "substance of things hoped for" (cp. Heb. xi. 1). Prediction filled the air of their epoch, so as to be the atmosphere they breathed. But not only so, their very life of faith was rooted in dependence on God for *future* good ("evidence of things not seen"), which was maker of promise, all concerning *one seed*. They *had* the thing to whose coming they looked forward, as one has the sun who in the dawning waits for sunrise. The aloe, which is to blossom only at the close of the century, *is* in that lost paradise all through the hundred years growing toward the fateful point of blossoming manifestation (John ii. 11; cp. Gal. vi. 14). The *blossom* is really there, all through those years, on its way of inchoation to this manifestation. And all through the century *the great thing* really present, the transcendental reality of the whole history, is *that one seed*, the unseen blossom, in movement toward visibility at "the fulness of the times."

The people were not distinctly aware of all this. And even the prophets (1 Pet. i. 11) had to try to *feel* their way to the distinct significance of that which was not yet in full

explicitness of blossoming. But they *had the thing*, and lived upon it, as heaven was in Canaan and the sanctuary of the universe was in the tabernacle, where Israel's life was hid with Christ in God. And (Heb. i. 1, expounded in xi.-xii.) the whole of their life depended on their realising the substance in that shadow, the unseen future good as a visibly present reality. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

That, however, is in a real sense common to the Christian life of all the epochs of time. For "we are saved by hope;" and the real present is but the dawning of an ideal future most real, in which we now apprehend that for which we are apprehended. The speciality in the condition of the Old Testament believers during their prophetic epoch was, that the word which came to them continuously as the sunshine, was a "prophetic word" (2 Pet. i. 19) in the strict sense of *predictive* word. And the predictions all had their organising principle of unity in that one seed, supernatural, of promise, as the planetary stars have their unity in the sun. The general providence of God, shown in the history of the peoples around them, was thus to their view exhibited as not taking end in the finishing of God's particular accounts with those peoples respectively, but being sovereignly directed further to the accomplishment of His one great purpose in the chosen seed. And the special providence which thus appeared as operative even in general history, as Christ is "head over all things to the Church which is His body," was known to them to be also directly operative upon themselves and within themselves, among whom the Redeemer of Israel, who is the Creator of the universe, had His dwelling (cp. Isa. xl. 26-31). In particular, the instruction through the prophets was a continual intimation to them of what *was about to happen in their own case*, as a community whose unity was constituted by that seed. This epoch thus was literally a *régime* of prediction. And the prediction in its core was always of the incalculable. For the whole fabric of their life of faith reposed on the faithfulness of God in keeping His covenant promises; it is only because He was "the Lord, who changeth not," that the seed of Jacob was not consumed.

Underlying that articulate spoken prophecy, there was the silent prophecy of the types especially in the ceremonial system, with its tabernacle of testimony, regarding the true way of man's true life in God; and with its Passover of

remembrance, regarding the wonder of the origination of that life and its ever-living way (Heb. x. 19–22), unworn as the way of ships upon the sea. How far, precisely, that system was understood by the believers as being not only symbolical but typical, and also, how far they understood this or that thing beyond the system as being typical,—for instance, the sign of Jonas the prophet,—we will not now inquire. That they were aware, generally, that (Heb. iv.) Canaan was not the true rest, and that the heavenly original of the tabernacle had to be waited for as well as sought for, we can see and understand. Melchisedek, *e.g.* (Ps. cx. ; cp. Heb. vii.), they knew from express revelation as being, not a mere “rover” (*planet*), like a wandering Balaam star, but really and vitally connected with the system though ostensibly not in it nor of it; as a true “planet,” which means “rover,” is really law-abiding, keeping place and time, and helping to maintain the general order of the system in which it seems a stranger (*Gershom*). And they may, through unrecorded instructions of prophecy, have had means of information regarding what was typical in the old system beyond what was represented by the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, and other means of information given to *us* in the new dispensation. We do not know that all the prophetic instructions of the old time was recorded for our learning. And, no matter what may have been the *amount* of their comprehension of the types, the point for us at present is *the fact*, that in that pictorial gospel they had *some* knowledge of the true way of life in God’s redeeming love (in 1 Pet. i. 10 we see them *trying* to write an *Epistle to the Hebrews*).

Here again, therefore, we see them under a *régime* of prediction. “The law was a shadow of good things to come.” And the shadowy priesthood, intercession, sacrifice, expiation, regeneration, all spoke to them ever of the coming substance of the good supreme. The aloe, as it goes on *growing* through the century, with ever-growing clearness, foreshadows the blossom which is to shine out at the close. In the geologic history of the old creation, whose blossoming at the close was to be man, there were, at every stage of the movement in the past, indications of the coming of manhood in the future. And more generally, “the archetypal idea,” says Owen, prince of comparative anatomists, “was manifested in the flesh, under divers

modifications, upon this planet long prior to the existence of those animal species which exemplify it." So in the Old Testament typology. While the kingdom of God went on unfolding otherwise, as the aloe continues the silent growing, prophecy at the same time went on ever showing, with more and more of clear distinctness, what all the time was *the thing*, the true principle of unity of life, progressively through the whole. Thus there was a continuous dumb-show prediction in the whole system of the types; as in springtime every day has in it promise of a brighter morrow. And the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, in saying that Christ is Moses unveiled, says in other words that the ancient system of the types is now shown by fulfilment to have been a miraculous prediction in dumb-show:—prediction that now appears in the glory of its fulfilment; a Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration, speaking of that *exodus* ("decease") of Christ which (ἐμελλεν) He was destined to accomplish at Jerusalem.

When we look back beyond the ceremonial law, and the exodus, and Egypt, we see Abraham receiving that covenant, with promise and signature and seal, which was the heart of the religion of his posterity all down through the old dispensation, and Mosaism coming to be superinduced on the face of it. And in the life of Abraham and other patriarchs, as well as in Israel's life under bondage and through deliverance, we ever see miraculous prediction of the future of the chosen people themselves, and of the future of the outside world in its bearing upon them. *Without predictions of the incalculable future, the Abrahamic religion never breathed. And if at any time the prophecy had failed in respect of fulfilment in miracle of wisdom, the religion must have ceased to live.* For to that life all the outward influences were unfavourable. The religion really had nothing to live upon but the faithfulness of God in His "prophetic word." The very continuance of its existence in that early time is (cp. Eph. ii. 7) for all succeeding ages a proof of supernaturalism, in the origination and the sustentation of it. Simply as *a life of faith*, that aloe, which went on living through the centuries, to blossom as a passion flower on the Cross, must have been originally planted by God; and all through the ages it must have had a sunshine and a rainfall of true supernatural "power and presence" of the Redeemer.

(4.) *As to Christ in the new dispensation.*

As the half is sometimes more than the whole, we will not now inquire into the predictions uttered by Christ and His apostles in the New Testament (see on Christ's Own Prophetic Utterance, Bk. II. chap. i. sec. 3), but will restrict our attention to the *predictions regarding Christ in the Old Testament*, said to be fulfilled in His coming and work, as historically set forth in the New. That will suffice for our purpose at the present stage of our inquiry; and, in this case, enough is better than a feast.

At the threshold we find, in the New Testament itself, that ostensibly *the community*, which were the custodiers of the Old Scriptures, *did not believe that Jesus was the Christ*. And it here is an interesting side-question how the prophecies regarding the Messiah are regarded by the unbelieving Jews. But the pathetic interest of that question must not be allowed to blind us to the fact, which we have observed, that Peter and Paul, two thorough-going Old Testament Hebrews, maintained that the *real Jews* (cp. John in Rev. ii. 9, iii. 9) *did believe on Jesus as the Christ*, and that those who rejected Him were only an outward Israel, a seed of Abraham according to the flesh. JESUS OF NAZARETH,—*Paul, and Peter, and the other apostles and evangelists, and the 3000, and the 5000, and the 144,000* (Rev. vii.), *all believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the Old Testament Messiah, "the Christ, the Son of the Beloved One."* So did Jesus Himself. These were Jews. They were on the spot at the time. They knew the Old Scriptures just as well as we can know them, and they had the most powerful conceivable motives to make sure as to the meaning of them. If the present question had been about human authority on account of presumable qualification, it could be said with truth that, irrespectively of inspiration, the original New Testament Church and its founders are, relatively to the real meaning of those Scriptures, far the most important witnesses that have ever spoken.

As to the unbelieving Jews, they certainly do not appear to have any special qualification for knowing the meaning of those Scriptures. Their specialty is, in the estimation of Christendom, that as to this matter they are *blind* (2 Cor. iii.

14; cp. John ix. 39-41). What is the difference between them and other men? Not their natural descent from Abraham and circumcision in the flesh; that is common to the Ishmaelites along with them. Their specialty is their unbelief. And unbelief does not appear to be a special qualification for understanding the Old Testament, though some appear to think it is.

Paul, in the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch (Acts xiii. 27), said that the dwellers at Jerusalem, and their rulers, did not know Christ when He came. But he said in the same breath (cp. John xx. 9), that *neither* did they know "the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day," and that they fulfilled those prophets by condemning the true Christ. The question, then, What do the Jews think about the prophecies of Messiah, seeing that they do not own a fulfilment of them in Jesus of Nazareth? is not important in relation to the justice of His claim to be the Christ of prophecy.

It is said that some of them admit that there was in Jesus of Nazareth a sort of fulfilment of those prophecies, to the extent of His having been a true prophetic reformer—not a divine Redeemer. It is known that others of them have given up expectation of the coming of any Messiah; which would imply that the prophecies were untrue. As for those who rejected the suffering Son of Mary, we saw that the sort of Messiah, for the sake of whom they rejected Him, is a Christ of exaltation only, not of humiliation—exalting Jews and humiliating Gentiles; and that the Old Testament Messiah is a humiliation Christ so clearly, that some of their Rabbis sought their way out of the difficulty thus occasioned by supposing that the Old Testament has *two* Messiahs, one of exaltation and one of humiliation. Thus Paul has cause for saying *to them*, "Not seeds, but seed;" and for asking the unbelieving Jews as well as the Judaising Corinthians, "Is Christ divided?"

The glory of that Messiah of those Jews was to be *for them*. The outcome was to be glorification of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, in a kingdom of a corresponding quality, for glorification of the Jews. The true seed of Abraham is for blessing to all the nations of the earth. And a distinguishing glory claimed for Jesus as the Christ is, that through His

coming there is abolition of the difference between Jew and Gentile through their being both placed on the highest footing that can be occupied by any creature: "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ."

In the Bible system we find intimations of a universalism yet more comprehensive. The redemption by Christ is represented as having for its purpose and effect a restoration and a definitive establishment of the moral order of the whole universe of rational creatures. That (Chalmers, *Astronomical Discourses*) has a bearing upon the question of the truth of Christianity as meeting the objection: It is *unlikely* that a thing so great as incarnation of God, and humiliation unto death of God incarnate, should have been done for a world so insignificant as ours. The answer is: As to antecedent likelihood, (1) we perhaps are not qualified to judge; but we may see that God can bestow His whole mind upon little things, since, while the telescope discovers a system in every fixed star, the microscope discloses a world in every atom. (2) This world of ours may be the theatre of the one great war of God's kingdom of light against the usurpation of darkness in the universe; and the work of man's redemption may be the one great battle of that war.

At present we only glance at that aspect of the great matter in passing on to the specific question as to Old Testament prophecy fulfilled in Christ. Under that description there fall to be considered *specific predictions* in distinct passages of the Old Testament regarding the Messiah. Along with these there are what may be described as *particular "marks"* (τεκμήρια, "He showed them His hands and His side"), which, though in isolation, they should not have the force of specific prediction, yet *in Him*, like the wounds of the cross, serve toward identification of Jesus as the Christ, as converging light-rays in a system of circumstantial evidence. And very important is what cannot be reduced to either of those heads, but, in fact, includes them both—the ostensible correspondence to what is demanded by the *Old Testament as a whole* (Luke xxiv. 27, 44), or, in the substance of it, with what has historically appeared in Christ and His work, and what has had no shadow of appearing in any other way in the history of the world.

1. As to circumstantial evidence of *particular* "marks," Christ and His apostles, in claiming for His Messiahship the attestation of Old Testament prophecy, do not appear to have laid emphasis on particular marks or even on specific predictions. The *formula* which occurs in Matthew with such characteristic frequency, "that it might be fulfilled which is written," etc., no doubt refers to *some* correspondence of the particular thing he is recording in the Gospel history to a particular thing in Old Testament Scripture. But the correspondence may not be the kind of "fulfilment" which we regard as evidence of supernatural forecast. Our habit of speaking and thinking so much about this one kind of fulfilment has occasioned a convenient conventional use of the word in one specific sense. But we must not allow our convention to operate retrospectively as a law for the evangelist, prescribing that he shall not have employed the word in a sense more general and free. The word is in its nature of an elastic character, and we must allow Matthew to intimate the sense in which he employs it.

Now the purpose of his using it, so far as can be judged from the connection in particular places, does not always mean more than simply *significant correspondence* or *suggestive coincidence* or *similarity*; the significance or suggestiveness always having an understood relation to the grand question, to which the history as a whole is the answer, whether Jesus is not the Christ (Matt. xi. 2, 3; cp. i. 1, 18). In this or that place, accordingly, the expression may not have a more definite meaning than "Here again you see the Old Testament rising into view as being fulfilled in this history." And that may imply only the emergence here of a something which, though it should have no significance if regarded by itself in isolation, may, in combination, really be of a significant suggestiveness,—having a *look* of the Old Testament which is significant,—furnishing a "mark" for identification of the person by serving to show that the history as a whole is a counterpart of correspondence to the "prophetic word" as a whole.

We have no reason nor right to suppose that Matthew's characteristic manner of frequent, one might say continual, side-notes of this kind upon the things emerging in the history

represents only an idiosyncrasy of Matthew. No doubt it fits into his individual manner of looking at the things of the kingdom of God. That is the reason of the selection of this man-pen of inspiration here,—that the thing has to be shown in a light in which it is natural for an inspired *Matthew* to see it. The idiosyncracies of the Scripture writers are by inspiration thus not destroyed, but employed. But none of them—certainly not a historian so piously grave as Matthew—would indulge his own idiosyncracies in a play of fancy upon accidental surface coincidences which are in no vital relation to the one subject of the history; and the other evangelists, the apostles, in addressing those who knew the Old Testament and their Master, *all proceed upon the same general view*, that there is a correspondence of this historical eventuation with the Old Testament prediction which implies that Jesus of Nazareth is sealed by prophecy as Jehovah's Christ (Acts iii. 18–25).

But we must distinguish between what serves for edification of a believer and what is requisite for the conviction of an inquirer. Matthew the *apostle*, showing the "sign" of miracle, may dogmatise. But Matthew the evangelist, pointing out this and that coincidence, invites us to exercise *our own reason* upon the question, What, if any, is the evidential value of this particular coincidence or correspondence as indicating supernatural foresight in the prophecy? And we may observe in general, that it does not necessarily affect the evidential value of a coincidence, that the thing which here emerges is unimportant in itself (a feather may show how the wind blows, and the closing of a flower at noon means an eclipse of the sun).

"He shall be called a Nazarene" is an offence to lexicographers, because "Nazarene" in the prophecy does not primarily mean "belonging to Nazareth" (as the whale's belly does not primarily mean the heart of the earth). But the external confusion out of which the coincidence results may (as in Achan's case) really add to the relevant significance of the coincidence: "the lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." The circumstance that, through unlikely accidents, a man-child is born at Bethlehem amid mean surroundings, is in itself unimportant. But in the present case the specification of Bethlehem in Old Testament prophecy

gives a significance of coincidence, or correspondence, of prediction to event, which is greatly enhanced by the strange unlikelihood of the external circumstances through which, in fact, the coincidence was brought about. "A bone of Him shall not be broken" has not *in itself* the circumstantial details of difference between the treatment of the malefactors whose legs were broken, and the piercing of Christ's side by the soldier's spear. But the human mind (of John, xix. 36), which saw a prophetic significance in that manner of sacrificing a lamb for the (undivided) "people of God," was profoundly clear, and may have seen the verification in the ("Passover," 1 Cor. v. 7) *setting* of that particular thing, which had no verifying circumstantials within itself, as the Calvary spear wound may not have had in it the private mark of that particular soldier. So as to the circumstance that the public career of Jesus began in "Galilee of the Gentiles;" there is a strange unlikelihood of this event, but that only adds impressive significance to the fulfilled prediction.

In the ordinary case of matter of fact, which admits of attestation by evidence of personal observers, "two or three witnesses" suffice to place the matter in daylight, beyond which there can be really no addition to the force of demonstration, as nothing can be clearer than the day. But in a question of identification of a person, through combination of circumstances which may be unimportant separately, number may be strength in the measure of its magnitude multiplied according to the *rationale* of a cumulative proof. We can see this in relation to the identification of Jesus before His ascension into heaven. (1) There was *frequency* of His appearances to the apostles during the forty days. (2) There was the *numerousness* of His (τεκμήρια) "infallible proofs" (which may have been the same mark *often shown*). And (3) there was the *multitude* of additional witnesses, the "more than five hundred persons" who "saw" Him "at once." In the present question of identification of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah of the Old Testament, the allegation of a hundred particular "marks," or of more, is very important. Bacon said that if the Bible predictions of Antichrist were published as a hue and cry, any constable in Europe would go straight to Rome and lay hands on the Pope. Yet the number of particular "marks" in that case is perhaps not ten. Of the alleged hundred, some may be really

fanciful and irrelevant. But the allegation of so many is very impressive. The "infinity" of mathematics, for absolute certainty, seems to be far more than made good under this head alone.

2. As to direct *specific predictions*. This head of evidence was handled by Bishop Chandler in *A Defence of Christianity from the Prophecies* (2nd ed., A.D. 1725). His argument, upon the ground of the predictions adduced by him, is twofold: (1) he proves, *in thesi*, that these utterances refer to the Messiah; and (2) *in hypothesi*, he shows that the prediction them, every one separately, is fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. The number of passages at first adduced by him was twelve, to which he afterwards made some addition. But twelve in this case is ample, as in the case of twelve apostles. There may be evidence of prophecy not suitable for his argument under this head. Thus, there is the whole system of typology, which, in so far as it is really typological, is *eo ipso*, a miracle of forecast, "sealing" the Son of Mary as the Christ of God. Chandler has a separate exposition of this evidence in another part of his volume. Again, there is further evidence of highest value which would have been unsuitable to his argument, because, in the particular prophecy apart, not visibly direct and specific in referring to the Messiah; such as in those predictions which, though including the Messiah by implication, on the face of them refer to a class, and not only to an individual, *e.g.* the *protevangelium* (Gen. iii. 15), the promise of blessing for mankind in the seed of Abraham, and perhaps the Mosaic prediction (cp. Acts iii. 18-25) of a prophet like Moses who should be raised up to succeed him, if not to supersede him. Chandler had no real need of anxiously multiplying cases of specific prediction. A very few would suffice for the purpose of his argument. And the predictions of this class are only one part of the resources of evidence of Old Testament prophecy regarding Christ.

The reading of works like this of Chandler, and Keith's *Evidences of Prophecy*, and West *On the Resurrection*, is profitable for deliverance of the mind from mere cobwebs and mist of bookish theorising. Plain, strong manly thought, with adequate learning, and resolutely thorough expiscation of the matter of fact in hand, is in such works brought to bear upon

what really is a *jury question* of fact, to be determined by sound historic sense, or clear instinct for reality ; that which makes a man's judgment to be trustworthy as a jurymen or judge in ordinary matters of fact. Once the case, if a good one, is fairly set forth in such a work, the statement is definitive, like Butler's *Analogy*. The work remains unassailable as a public possession of mankind, like Euclid's elements or the multiplication table. Ambitious subtlety of theorising assailants is thenceforward only as a misty vapour. The specific predictions and the fulfilment of them remain as mountains, and the clouds pass away. Hobbes made no abiding impression to the detriment of the axioms of geometry. And, unless mankind be "sophisticated" by theorisings into permanent imbecility of unreason, it seems impossible that generation after generation should not go on to find, in the demonstrated correspondence of the history of Jesus of Nazareth and His work to Old Testament prophecy, clear proof of His Messiahship, and of the truth of the prophecy, and of the divinity of both.

3. As to *the general fact* of the correspondence of the historical appearance of Christ in the first century to the anticipation of the Old Testament as a whole. While we are engaged in studying the features of an old friend, and comparing them with our recollections of him as he was in the old times, we become aware that he has been quietly looking at us (John i. 48 ; Luke xxiv. 17), perhaps quietly smiling at our wondering, as if lost in a day-dream of reminiscences. It may well be that in the present relation the spirit of our exercise should give just occasion for the sorrowful reproach of Him who hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken !" (Luke xxiv. 25). To the two on the way to Emmaus, whom He had found engaged in earnest conversation about these matters, with a sadness on their countenance like that of the Man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, He put the question trenchantly (ver. 26), "*Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?*" That is the point of the question raised by what "the prophets have spoken:"—The Messiah of prophecy, is He not, as Jesus is, a humiliation-Christ in order to be an exaltation-Christ? And then, by way of answer to that question (ver. 27), "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scrip-

tures the things concerning Himself" (*who else is there?* Matt. xi. 3).

In that wide range of His scriptural demonstration He cannot have everywhere in Scripture sought, He could not find everywhere in Scripture, specific predictions of the Messiah's personal experience of suffering as a precursor of glory. What He must have sought and found is (1 Pet. i. 9, 12), along the whole course of the Old Testament Scripture, a system or plenitude of intimations really corresponding to the course of His career, now brought clearly to a point, at which there is concentrated the light of the whole, in His suffering unto death to be followed by resurrection unto glory. And that manner of putting the matter was not peculiar to the one occasion of His interview with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. The same manner of putting it, appearing in the tender solemnity of that occasion, reappears in the yet more impressive grandeur of His manifestation of Himself as risen indeed, first, in the evening of that resurrection day, to the apostles at Jerusalem. And to them He said, that *this had been the manner, and even matter of His instructions to them in the previous course of His ministry*: "And He said unto them" (Luke xxiv. 44-48), "*These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me. Then opened He their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved the Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached to all nations in His name, beginning at Jerusalem.*"

In the actual cases of which we have notices in the Gospel history of His ministry, cases of His appealing to the authority of the Old Testament, we do not find that He proceeded in Matthew's manner, of appealing to particular marking incidents in the external non-essential circumstances of His career. And with reference even to the central substance of Messiahism, in person and work, He does not seem to have laboured, in the manner of Chandler, in exposition and application of specific predictions. The Messianic psalm (Ps. cx.), for instance, to which He on one occasion referred in proof of

the Messiah's divinity, happened to be on that occasion felicitously applicable to the purpose of an *argumentum ad hominem*, from the mouth of David, reasoning with those who made the Christ to be the son of David. As to the passage of Isaiah (Isa. lxi. 1) spoken expressly of Messiah (or "anointed"), which, on occasion of His first preaching at Nazareth, He declared to be fulfilled that day in their hearing (Luke iv. 16, etc.), it is expressly mentioned by the historian that the book in which it occurs had been handed to Him by others for the public reading; and apparently the prediction, without any labour of search, presented itself to the eye that looked for it as the sacred roll of Scripture was opened by His hand. We observe, too, that there the *argumentum ad hominem* of His application of the Old Testament to the Nazareth people was not from the prophecy of Isaiah, but from the miracles of Elijah and Elisha, as indicating generally in what manner the Messiah might be expected to proceed in His beneficent works of wonder.

But when John the Baptist raised the question formally and directly (Matt. xi. 2, 3), personating, so to speak, that Old Testament of which (ver. 13) His prophecy was the latest word, then Jesus (vers. 4-6), with manifest appeal, in almost formal quotation, to that same expressly Messianic prediction by Isaiah, did, no doubt, in the ordinary sense of the expression, prove His title to Messiahship by means of a proof text,—a specific prediction that was now fulfilled. That, however, was a prediction which, though specific in the form of it, is generic in the substance of it, as being descriptive, not merely of some particular detailed incidents appearing in the Messiah and His career, but rather of main characteristic aspects of that whole glorious fulness of grace and truth which appeared alike in the miracles (John i. 11) and in the teaching (Luke iv. 22) of Jesus of Nazareth, from the outset of His ministry. And that it was thus—with a reference to *main characteristic aspects*—that He appealed to "Moses," as well as to "all the prophets" (Luke xxiv. 27), or (ver. 44) to "the law of Moses," as well as to "the prophets and the psalms," may be inferred from the notices which the Gospels have of His applications of the pentateuchal Scripture.

Thus the use which He makes of the first gospel preaching (Gen. iii. 15; John viii. 38, 44) is, without expressly specifying it, to point its application to the seed of the serpent, leaving it to be inferred which is the blessed seed of the woman. In the same connection (John viii. 56-58) it

is not simply to the specific prediction of a blessing through Abraham and his seed, but rather to the whole blessed aspect of the day of Christ—a Christ who really was before that early dawning—that He refers, as having made the father of believers to be glad in the foresight of the sunshine. And when He speaks (John v. 45–47) of Moses as bearing witness to Him, He refers not only to the express prediction (Deut. xviii. 15) of a Prophet who was to be raised up, but rather to the substantive tenor of the Mosaic Scriptures—“He wrote of me . . . If ye believe not his writings.” So as to the typology of “the law of Moses.” The brazen serpent has by Christian writers been made the occasion of abundant ingenuity in the suggestion of detailed analogies; Christ Himself sees in it only *the grand characteristic aspect of redemption*, both in Egypt and on Calvary—“God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but might have everlasting life.”

The apostles, in their appeals to prophetic attestation of His Messiahship, appear to have proceeded in like manner; pointing to correspondence of the historical appearance in Him to the prophetic anticipation of Messiah, in respect, not merely of detailed characters, but of *main characteristic aspects* of the whole. From the references to “times,” as being in their fullness at His coming (Eph. i. 10), and from the description of Paul’s procedure (Acts xvii. 3) (“as his manner was,” ver. 2) in the Thessalonian synagogue of the Jews, we may suppose that in close dealing with Jews upon the ground of evidence of prophecy, the apostles at least occasionally went into the prophetic use of numbers, such as those in the Book of Daniel (which no one then suspected of forgery), for the purpose of aiding toward a conclusion after the manner of Daniel himself (Dan. ix. 2) in coming to “understand by books the number of the years.” But both from the theological reasonings of Paul upon the grounds of Old Testament history, and generally from the manner of alluding to that Scripture in apostolic writings to Christians, and still more from the evangelistic addresses of Peter, Stephen, and Paul, to inquiring Jews about the Messiahship of the crucified Jesus, we may confidently conclude that what the apostolic reasoning from prophecy proceeded upon in substance was the correspondence of the appearance of Jesus to the anticipation of prophecy in respect of main characteristic aspects, represented by the great outstanding facts of His

career: *His miracles, His humiliation unto death, His resurrection from the dead, and the miraculous downpouring of the Spirit upon the community of those believing in Him, along with rejection of Him, and murderous persecution of Him and of His followers* on the part of the priesthood and the nation of the Jews (now in the course of being visibly abandoned of heaven, a thing which was likewise in accordance with the prophecies regarding Messiah).

From this point of the visible dissolution of the Old Theocracy we may take our parting view of the subject. From this point, where the seed of Abraham according to the flesh is visibly rejected, and consequently scattered away from the land of promise, we look back to the original planting of the seed of promise—in the paradise of God, but for a now fallen mankind. And in the intervening course of the many long ages of the slow growth of this wonderful aloe toward a blossoming which appears a blasting (Gal. iii. 13), we observe *the promise in the seed becomes ever more and more distinctly pointed in respect of personality*, the person always in some way bearing marks of promise, of election, of sovereignty, of electing grace of God. The pathetic *placing* of “Seth” (which is Heb. for “put” or “appointed”) in the room of Abel whom Cain slew (said the first mother about her first-born, and her first dead); the careful record of Sethite lineage in antediluvian genealogy, which is followed out through Abraham until at last we find it in the obscure lowliness of Nazareth; and the prophetic significance attached respectively to the sons of Noah; these landmarks connect the history of that earlier time with the later patriarchy of a recovered earth. Then, on our side of the Flood, under sign of the rainbow and with seal of the covenant, we see the one seed becoming defined more and more precisely at every stage as being in *Abraham, in Isaac, in Jacob, of the tribe of Judah, of the family of David*, until at last we see the “finger” of prophecy pointing to where the *star* is lingering over BETHLEHEM. Along that line we mark suggestive side-lights of a deep significance, all pointing to supernaturalism as running in the line; in Isaac there is (Heb. xi. 19) a figurative resurrection and a seemingly typical redemption through substitution, as well as a clearly miraculous conception; there is a suggestive

redemption of the brethren in Joseph, the betrayed and rejected of them; and Rahab and Ruth, born aliens and heathens, are admitted into the line so illustrious in election and in covenant. All this points to the conclusion that there is *one seed* (of promise, sovereign grace, new creation) which is manifold, and that the unity of the manifold is in the coming Christ. So Matthew, being distinctively an Hebrew historian, traces the lineage of Jesus the Christ back to Abraham—a first *one*—in whom that seed began to have its *Hebrew* (cp. Heb. ii. 16) existence of distinctness in the populations of the world. And Luke (the humane), being above all things a man, traces it back to Adam, *that first one* which (Luke iii. 38) was the “Son of God.”

Thus far prophecy (in that “seed”) finds in Christ “the desire of all nations.” For mankind are naturally sensitive about lineage. As we have seen a non-moral criticism in readiness to believe in *lies*—of prophets and apostles, so now we see a non-human science in willingness to own descent from “a hairy quadruped,” perhaps living in trees. The “*noble races*” have believed in descent from heroes, sons of gods. And further, in the ancient prophecy, coming down unfolding along with an unfolding history, which is a providence of God, both general and special, the *chosen* race of God see that hope of mankind in the blessed seed, apparently approaching ever nearer and nearer for the completed consolation of humanity.

But if we listen to what comes to us as “historical criticism” in the spirit of the age (cp. Eph. ii. 2), then “a change comes o’er the spirit of our dream.” For us, too, the magnificent image (of the *Fifth Monarchy*) is scattered into utter dissolution as mere chaff. The mountain of our hope is but a sandhill, whirled away by hurricane into nothingness. The river, which, in fulness as of the Nile stream, was flowing down through the ages from beneath the throne of God, is a mocking mirage, a nothing, whose disappearance of illusion shows that in reality there has only been the barren desolation of a nothing in that past. That is to say, *unless there be in the New Testament Christ a fulfilment of that prophecy which, whether spoken or unspoken, occupied all the ancient time, a great river not merely has ceased to flow, but has never been.*

Within the tabernacle was the place Most Holy, where the high priest ministered before the blood-sprinkled throne of grace. That heart of the ancient religion, which was all one great continuous foreshadowing as well as foretaste of the coming good, has proved to have been but a dream. *So, consequently*, has the *historical exodus*, in which Bunsen saw the beginning of all real history of mankind; and, that *history of Israel* as the kingdom of God which makes the Old Testament; and, *the monumental people* of Jehovah,—*these have no being in the past*, they have departed all traceless like a dream. And not only the inner curtain of the tabernacle is thus unreal. So also is the outer curtain of *Israel's environment in the communities around, the world empires in their grand succession, the more comprehensive mankind of the kindreds, and peoples, and tongues*,—all are as if they had not been. *The whole historical system of antiquity* is not a sandhill, now whirled away by hurricane of criticism, but a thing that was not, a no-thing, mere optical illusion.

The disappearance of the body of Moses, Elijah's translation, the resurrection of Christ, and the resurrection of all the dead in their season, are not to be compared to this. *They* are wonderful, and thus attractive to the soul: *this* is revolting to the reason as inconceivably absurd—utterly crass incoherence. In *their* case the thing which has been shall be; its being has only passed into a new phase, more bright in glory, complete realisation; so that a man may say, I never comprehended history until I apprehended Christ. But *this* is absolute mockery of reason. It is all history proving to be nothing but the baseless fabric of a vision. Heathen mankind was unable to grasp the vaguely apprehended unity of its own being, or to give a coherent account of its dream. Historical criticism of the new civilisation finds that there was nothing to dream about; the “Daniel” of Tübingen has discovered that even the dream had no existence.

NOTE.

On Unfulfilled Prophecy, and the Prophetic use of Numbers.

THE diligence of some students of prophecy in collating the predictions with the gossip of their parish has been a misfortune to Apologetics in two ways. 1. Generally, it throws an air of ridicule upon the whole matter of Christian revelation, occasioning the impression that that sort of thing is what is meant by Christianity and its evidences. 2. Specially, in the mind of those who are aware that that impression is unreasonable and unjust, there still remains a feeling of insecurity and a distrust in relation to evidence of prophecy, as a thing which apparently admits of arbitrary free handling, in which a man has copious freedom in the measure of his lack of solid judgment and real knowledge. The deduction which thus is made from the effective force of evidence, is not simply so much withdrawn, as when one of two candles is blown out in a room ; it may be rather, as when one of two wings is broken, so that there can be no soaring of that wounded bird. It is remarkable that even when Christ was bodily present to the disciples after He had risen from the dead, still it was *in the Scriptures* (Luke xxiv.) that He showed them the things concerning Himself. And John (xx. 9) says, by implication, that ignorance of the relative *Scripture* was what had kept him from believing in the resurrection.

Chalmers, besides, noted as a recommendation to the study of prophecy, that it keeps the mind in living contact with the substance of the gospel, since the central burden of prophecy is always the new kingdom of God. And as the specific essence of prophecy is representation of the sovereignty of divine free will in history, the habit of thinking about prophecy is directly fitted to maintain that habitual dependence on the providence of God which is the living foundation of practical religion in the soul. This effect of the study may have place though the prediction should not be visibly or apparently fulfilled. Though the fulfilment should thus for the student be only in the future as a matter of conjecture, yet the study keeps in vivid apprehension that the providence of God is *now* working, in a manner that is "holy, wise, and powerful," for the accomplishment of His purposes, which shall be seen clear in the end. The interest which good men take in the study is thus seen to be in various ways rational and Christian. And discernment of "the signs of the times" is in the practical teaching of Scripture represented as at once an exercise and an evidence of enlight-

ened Christian faith. And this is made more impressive by being specially connected with the great event of the second coming of Christ.

It is not to be expected, nor to be desired, that Christians should be kept from taking a due interest in the matter, and giving due diligence to the study of the subject, by the possibility or the fact of such misfortune as the mistake made by weak but well-meaning men, who turn the prophetic Scriptures into a Zadkiel's Almanac, of sensational advertisements beforehand.

But the possibility of such misfortune is a strong reason why the study of prophecy should be prosecuted with a guarded sobriety of mind, and under influence of due remembrance of the fact, that a readiness to see fulfilments may be only a weak facility of belief, which is alien to the spirit of counsel and might; and that an eager credulity in relation to fulfilments is amenable to the censure, "He that believeth shall not make haste;" while a certain free handling of prophecy in application to current events is essentially a profanation of what is holy, like the profanation of the lot in the form of gambling at church bazaars. It is a striking remark of Dr. Joseph Addison Alexander, that schemes of prophetic interpretation which bring the great fulfilment near to *our* time, may find favour through the influence of that insatiable vanity of self-importance, which disposes every man to regard his own personality as the *umbilicus terrarum*. On the other hand, may not schemes which put off the fulfilment find favour (cp. 2 Pet. iii. 12) through influence of coldness toward God in Christ on the part of men who, professedly "loving Him unseen," yet do not "love His appearing"?

One due precaution, as to which apologetic has a special interest and claim of right, is, that men should, in their own minds and in their discourses to others, be duly regardful of the important distinction between belief in God's own "sure prophetic word" and reliance upon our human constructions of prophecy not yet fulfilled. Construction of unfulfilled prophecy may be quite a legitimate exercise, as when Daniel knew from books the number of the years, and when believing men were looking for redemption in Israel at the time of the first coming of the Lord. The exercise, duly guarded, may have the effect desired for his brethren by the Apostle of the Gentiles, "that ye through patience and through the comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." And into it there may largely enter, as a rich refreshing strengthener to the very roots of life in faith, practical recognition of that sovereign providence of God, *now* engaged in bringing about through history the glorious mani-

festation of the coming day, which shines upon us in the luminous cloud of the prophetic promise not fulfilled. But the determining element in favour of a particular construction of unfulfilled prophecy is one's own judgment. If we place upon our construction of prophecy the same honour as on the prophetic word, we make ourselves "infallible interpreters" of Scripture, and are in danger of coming to have a faith which standeth, not in the power of God, but in the wisdom of man.

A man may be presumptuous, putting his own constructions in the place of the prophetic word, in prosecution of the argument from external evidence of prophecy. But there are two considerations which in this case ought to be borne in mind: (1) the evidence of prophecy is an important means of grace, for faith and edification, which we are bound to employ for the ordinary purposes of witness-bearing on behalf of truth; and (2) the material for the apologetic argument from prophecy is only that which is producible in open court of the judgment of mankind. In other words, it is only such as is derivable from prophecy plainly fulfilled, so plainly that a Christian advocate can with propriety lay it before any jury of plain men, claiming their assent to it as a thing which need only to be fairly looked at by plain men in order to be seen.

THE END.

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